

PORTABILITY



thresholds 34

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Contributors

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Maleonn was born in Shanghai in 1972, and trained as a Graphic Designer in the Fine Art College of Shanghai University. From 1995-2003, he worked in the commercial film industry as an Art Director and Director. In 2004, he began working as an independent artist, and has since exhibited widely in China, Europe and North America.





Carlos Martin has worked in academic, government, and private sectors in the areas of technological and social change related to the design and construction industry, particularly in relation to affordable housing. Trained as an architect, construction engineer and historian of technology, he studies the cultural and industrial barriers to technological change—including those related to class, race, and nationality.

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Joel Ross, a native Texan, uses installation, drawing, video, and photography to address issues of language and place. His recent work includes *Replicas of Flags I've Burned*, blinking light boxes of the US and Iraqi flags, and drawings from bumper stickers like *United We Stand, My SUV luvz Iraqi Oil* and *God Guns Glory*. Ross teaches at the School of Art & Design, University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana, IL.

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Winnie Won Yin Wong is a PhD candidate in the History, Theory, and Criticism of Architecture and Art at MIT. Her research interests include transnational issues in art, design, intellectual property, and consumer culture.

Xiao Xiong is Artistic Director of the Long March Space in Beijing, China. Born in Fujian province, he has exhibited in Beijing, Prague, Norway and France.

Shundana Yusaf is a PhD candidate in History and Theory of Architecture at Princeton University, School of Architecture. She is writing a dissertation on early BBC's patronage of modern architecture entitled *Wireless Sites: British Architecture in the Space of Radio (1927-1945)*.



Introduction

By Winnie Won Yin Wong

Globalization is often portrayed as hyper-mobility across spaces of heterogeneity. In this imaginary landscape, unfettered movement, seamless translation and complete reciprocity reign. Such an utopia requires impossibly totalizing and instantaneous objects, things like universal translators and total-information computers. But whether unleashed in reality or in science fiction, mobile objects quickly become encumbered by quotidian problems: enabled with our mobile phones, we obsess about how we might carry them (in a purse, a pocket, on a belt or neck strap?), where we can use them (will it work in Europe? can I text you from India?), and why not (is it GSM tri-band, quad-band, IDMA, or CDMA?). "Roaming" frustrates.

thresholds 34 situates portability—the fidelity of function across cultures, languages, platforms, spaces—as a central design problem of the mobile age. Art, Architecture, and Design, can respond to the fictions of the mobile in both critical and productive ways. Our contributors probe the historical roots of free exchange, explore the contradictions unleashed by mobile objects and concepts, create portable solutions, or use portable objects themselves to investigate place-based constructs, transactions, or politics.

Unsurprisingly, capitalism is a common field of inquiry for many of our contributors. The regulated nature of movement in American capitalism is the subject of both **Gautham Rao's** and **Carlos Martín's** studies. Their accounts, respectively, of the profitable movement of re-exported goods in the mid-19th century through US port cities, and the trans-border portability of construction and design skill in 1990s California and Mexico, scrutinize the interdependence of regulated transfer and illicit movement.

De-regulation as an operative fiction of global capital is tantalizingly offered in today's Dubai. As **Nadia Alhasani** describes, the horizons of capital's expansionist imaginaries may seem preposterous in old-world terms, but are in fact, supported by long-established facts on the ground. So it is fitting that **Saud Sharaf's** part-business plan, part-urban design proposal for an oceanic mega-transshipment port in the Persian Gulf looks like a viable venture but also rather like **Max Kuo's** absurdist real estate and urban design proposal for profit "recentering" in grid- and ring-locked Beijing. If proposals for such massive reconfigurations of urban landscapes are simultaneously serious and absurd, as **Hijoo Son** suggests, it is because globalization is, more often than not, a (realistic) science fiction.

Kuo's and Sharaf's proposals are two of the numerous contributions in *thresholds 34* that utilize the disciplinary frictions between architecture and art to rethink the mobile as the quasi-portable. **Dina Deitsch** describes the striking transformation of a Texas motel room into a sculpture of 50 suitcases, now on display at a boutique hotel in Chicago, in **Joel Ross's** *Room 28*. As Deitsch argues, the roadscape of capital is also the unhindered, liminal site of the American road trip; a fiction that is de-sublimated by Ross's invented memory of unrequited love that lies behind the work. In the same way, **Xiao Xiong's** journal entries from his *Enter and Exit* frustrate the supplementation of the great history of the Chinese Communist Party with the half-memories and partial-confirmations of the people-there, now.

Xiao and Ross share loosely a guise of the "traveling artist." Both work "on the road" and not in explicit performance contexts, but both tote away objects as their artistic act. In contrast, **Plamen Dejanoff's** *Planet of Comparisons* brings art institutions into his oeuvre and his hometown in Bulgaria, by brazenly demanding that they build museum outposts in this (for-now) unknown peripheral location. For **Mihnea Mircan**, Dejanoff's strategy of working within capital and within

institutions offers the potential for the constructs of "east" and "west" to meet on the artist's platform, overturning the exhibitionary apparatus so that the institution, not the artwork, becomes portable.

The dispersal of aesthetic experiences into very near, but significantly othered spaces, is also the subject of **Thomas Stubblefield's** study of "off-screen" cinema, and **Shundana Yusaf's** study of the early BBC's attempts to broadcast, through radio, aesthetic acculturation to the nation at large. Where Stubblefield finds in the "disassembly" of filmic experience a more complete cinema, Yusaf discovers that radio broadcasting was unable to translate aesthetic experiences into aural, pedagogical ones, except, partially, in the case of architecture appreciation. Yusaf also finds that the broadcasting of architectural culture to a mass audience tended to favor, in later years, a modernism for the masses. As Stubblefield shows, the making of culture for and of "everyone," lends itself to particularly telling histories of how audiences are conceived in the course of mass-distribution.

Anneka Lenssen, tells an earlier story of mass-production and its relationship to distant others, in her reconstruction of the "carpet myth" in 19th-century architectural theory. For Lenssen, the trope of the carpet condenses a much broader orientalist impulse; in it is inscribed an architectural code of Arab-otherness, predicated on the romance of nomadism. This dual romance of modernism—design for all and design for a nomadic life—is taken up in **Stanford Anderson's** wry semi-autobiographical biography of the Bongo Bowl, and other portable objects of a semi-nomadic, semi-rooted life.

Though "new objects" seem now born into this spectrum of the mobile and the portable, "old" objects too can be reconsidered as objects in perpetual flux. Several of our contributors examine the portability of the most universal, even elemental, things: Food, Water, Air, Clothes, and Rights. **Remei Capdevila Werning** reports on an ingenious design for cross-Atlantic food smuggling using that most time-tested of portable things—the book. **Mark Jarzombek** looks at the religious economy of water in 13th-century Lalibela, activated by Libanos' hydro-engineered urban scheme. The technological and ethical violence of uprooting something so seemingly innocuous as air is the lyrical meta-text of **James Graham's** study of civil war-era submarine design. **Hanna Rose Shell**, in a piece about old clothes drawn from her and Vanessa Bertozi's experimental film, *Secondhand (Pepe)*, reminds us that the wearability of clothing is an intrinsic form of its portability, a state of constant transformation.

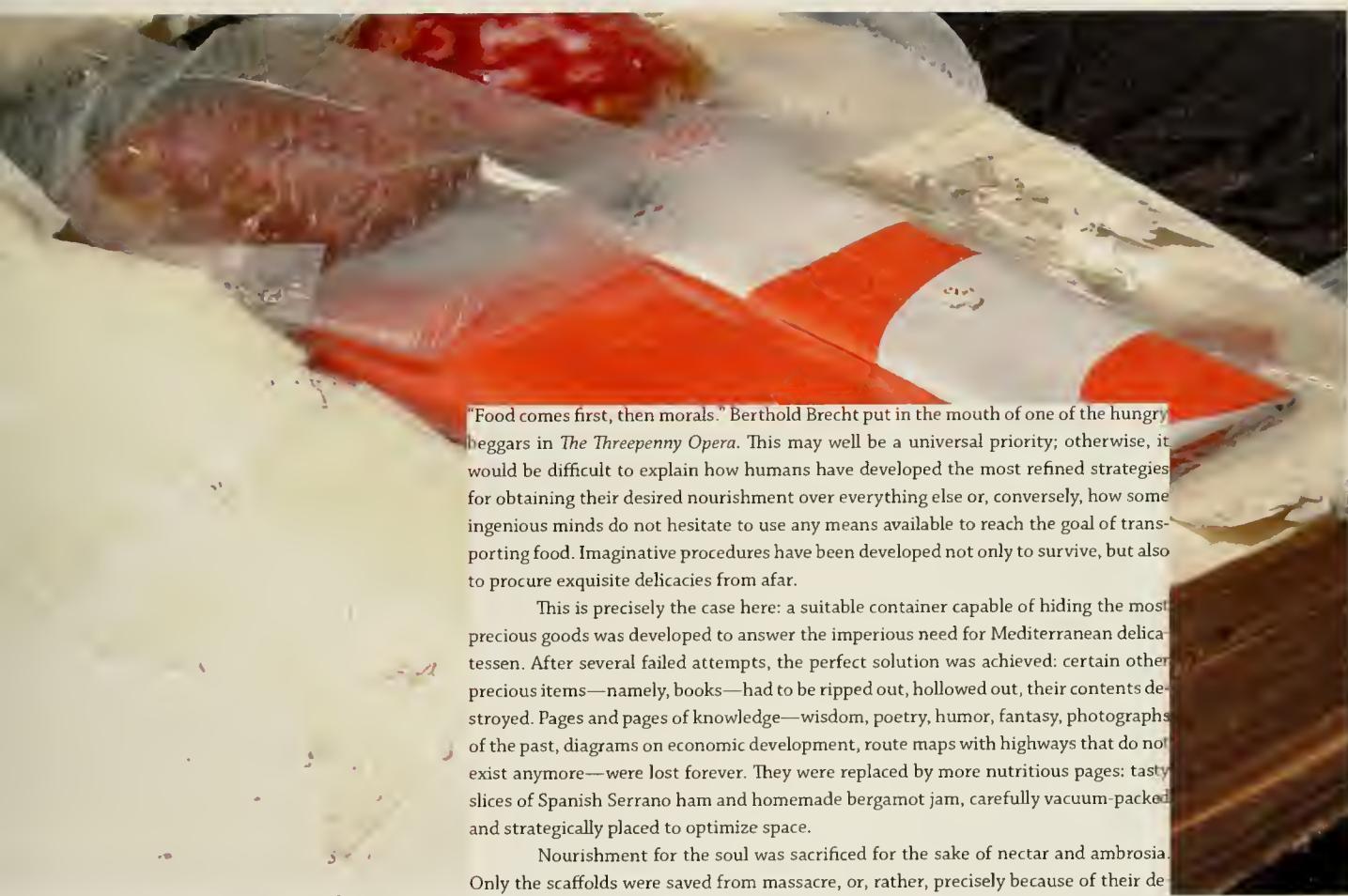
Of all our contributors, perhaps the most keyed towards a portable design solution is the Dutch organization Women on Waves. Founder **Rebecca Gomperts** and member **Susan Davies** campaign for the global reach of women's reproductive rights by mobilizing in an abortion clinic installed on a ship. Three years after their 2004 mission to Portugal, they reassess, in *thresholds* 34, their participation in the effort to decriminalize abortion in Portugal. By their insistence on the inviolate mobility of abortion rights beyond state borders, Women on Waves tests the politics of cultural-specificity. Like all of our contributions, they probe the constructed nature of free movement pertaining to objects from human rights to Spanish delicacies to Mao momentos to movie posters to submarines. Portable or not, these objects reveal the boundless contexts of the places they come from and arrive in. Boundaries spur movements and movements expose boundaries. *thresholds* 34 invites us to take two steps forward, three steps back, and four steps into the brave new world.

Food Comes First

By Remei Capdevila Werning



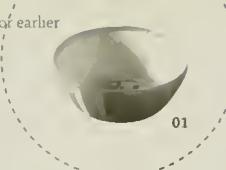
Every month, a certain student receives a package from her parents with food specialties from her home country that are impossible to find in her current residence. The contents are vacuum-packed to throw off the dogs at customs and hidden inside a book, whose pages have been hollowed out with a router and affixed to maintain their appearance. Once the paper has been replaced by the food, the book is wrapped in several layers and sent out labeled as documentation, delivered free of charge by a sympathetic shipping company knowing the dire reading needs of students abroad.



"Food comes first, then morals." Berthold Brecht put in the mouth of one of the hungry beggars in *The Threepenny Opera*. This may well be a universal priority; otherwise, it would be difficult to explain how humans have developed the most refined strategies for obtaining their desired nourishment over everything else or, conversely, how some ingenious minds do not hesitate to use any means available to reach the goal of transporting food. Imaginative procedures have been developed not only to survive, but also to procure exquisite delicacies from afar.

This is precisely the case here: a suitable container capable of hiding the most precious goods was developed to answer the imperious need for Mediterranean delicatessen. After several failed attempts, the perfect solution was achieved: certain other precious items—namely, books—had to be ripped out, hollowed out, their contents destroyed. Pages and pages of knowledge—wisdom, poetry, humor, fantasy, photographs of the past, diagrams on economic development, route maps with highways that do not exist anymore—were lost forever. They were replaced by more nutritious pages: tasty slices of Spanish Serrano ham and homemade bergamot jam, carefully vacuum-packed and strategically placed to optimize space.

Nourishment for the soul was sacrificed for the sake of nectar and ambrosia. Only the scaffolds were saved from massacre, or, rather, precisely because of their desirable physical characteristics, their contents were annihilated. The chosen ones fulfilled the required conditions: adequate size and weight, hard and thick covers, durable paper. Once filled, they became again what they had always been—portable goods, carefully wrapped in several layers to protect the treasure hidden inside.



"The New Object", or "The Bongo Bowl Esthetic" (1967)

By Stanford Anderson

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On 21 February 1967, I gave an invited lecture at the Graduate School of Design in Hunt Hall at Harvard University. My theme was a way of life facilitated, even exemplified, I thought, by an array of "new objects." The context is telling. From the time I left high school to the time I came to MIT as a professor in 1963, I had moved 12 times in 11 years, living in ten cities in seven states and three countries, attended five schools, worked at 12 jobs (including five architecture/design firms and a builder) in ten cities. My work immediately before MIT was as a "unit master" in the school of the Architectural Association in London—in the circle of Royston Landau and Cedric Price and at the time of the emergence of Archigram. The move from London in 1963 involved putting all my belongings and those of my girlfriend (later my first wife) in my Volkswagen, driving to Southampton to board both of us and the car on the trans-Atlantic ocean liner S.S. Statendam, and re-establishing ourselves in a rental apartment in Boston in the middle of the night after docking in New York. I thought I had a claim to be an itinerant and to have a legitimate fascination with mobility as part of an emerging way of life. [I am now in my 45th year at MIT.]

The recording of the lecture begins with shuffling noises as I, to the amusement or possible consternation of the audience, unpacked examples of "new objects." In much reduced form, it began as follows:¹

Last summer we went looking for a portable container that would retain the temperature of hot or cold liquids or foodstuffs, expecting to find some relatively expensive object of glass and metal with a vacuum seal, and hopefully of good design. It pleased us to find an inexpensive container contrived with some degree of vacuum within its double plastic skin (fig. 5)—a predecessor of the now ubiquitous Playmate. This simple experience set off a line of thought. From time to time we all have needs or desires that entail the acquisition of objects. If they are costly and of high design, of whatever taste, they begin to collect in our lives. Before you know it, they are numerous, requiring storage, anxiety-producing, virtual heirlooms, and ballast in your life. If objects of good design and modest cost were widely available, for a broad range of human needs, one might live well without feeling constraint on one's mobility, whether seasonal or definitive changes of location. Such objects are readily-left in the care of others; most are easy to move, but they can also be left to Good Will with benefit to the recipient and no remorse for the one moving on—objects that do not impede continuous open decision-making.

New objects are then, one might say, ephemeral, something that can be abandoned.



Anderson at lectern, Harvard GSD, 1967

"The New Object", or "The Bongo Bowl Esthetic" (1967)

In 1967, I entertained these thoughts in the context of Archigram's advocacy.² Noting Peter Cook's *Plug-In City*, I posited that the concept of the "new object" might also extend to architecture or at least architectural elements. But I also wanted to see the new objects in opposition to the throw-away advocacy of Archigram: "Kleenex architecture." Acknowledging the desirability of some range of disposable objects, as Kleenex itself, I pointed to the environmental problems [Al Gore was then only 18] of generalizing that trait over a wide range of production. The low cost and reasonable durability, yet unpossessive ownership afforded by new objects allows them to serve within liberated but responsible actions.

That was the substance of the introduction to my talk. I then launched into a half-hour academic lecture on the history of object production and relations of process and product from early industrialism, through the debates of the 1851 Exposition in London and down to the turn of the century advocacies of Art Nouveau, the Deutscher Werkbund, and Adolf Loos. I hope this still had some freshness forty years ago, but I think it was a pretty tough slog for the audience.

Returning to the new object, I emphasized that I was not, despite the examples I raised, merely advocating the wonders of plastic. There were new objects in other materials and before our time: the wood Thonet chairs; the bent-wire ice cream chairs. It is a matter of good design with a strong relation to material and process, resulting in effective and inexpensive products.

I suggested that design by architects still tended toward either the craft tradition or elitist, formal modern design. Even a shop such as the then understandably admired Design Research in Cambridge had little to offer of the type of the new object. I found Marco Zanuso's stacking children's chairs as exemplary (fig. 6). A small plastic brush from Woolworth's commended itself for its pro-

duction in a single casting, elegant and easy to keep clean (fig. 4).

What might one learn from these examples and intuitions?

In two centuries of industrial production, there had been some intimations of this kind of product, but the new object, in a wide range of production, is a new phenomenon. Devoid of either nostalgia or formal elitism, it lays claim to good design for its sound and economical relations to process and to use. In so doing it represents a change in attitude to the environment—in two respects. While it is not part of the traditional world of treasured objects, it is also not wasteful as would be the Archigram model of Kleenex architecture. It also facilitates a different environment in the sense of an open, mobile world that enables a continued, more free, determination of one's life, daily, seasonally, and in larger challenges.

In a growth environment, there is some imperative to shape one's life to the changes in a productive society. Today [in 1967, I claimed], electricity costs 4% of what it cost fifty years earlier measured by comparable wages. Popular use resulted in effective growth of the industry to the benefit of all. Today, again, cut-glass crystal costs 150% of what it did fifty years earlier. If one's demands are still for such glass, one must require a more disproportionate wealth now than before.

The new object is a sensibility in harmony with the conditions in which one lives, including the demands and opportunities of mobility and continuing open decisions.

Then, I allowed that the Archigram sensibility was probably more a Bongo Bowl esthetic than a Kleenex esthetic, but we might now draw the conclusion that we need scaled versions of such sensibilities. There are places for both Kleenex and Bongo Bowls, each with their own logics and environmental implications. But there is also place for a "long-term, semi-permanent, serviced part of the environment."³



A coda, with chronology

14

August 1963

Archigram 3 on "Expendability"

Summer 1964

Professor Henry Millon of MIT organized the Cranbrook Summer Seminar of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture on the theme of education in history in schools of architecture. Bruno Zevi had just become Head of the school in Rome; Zevi urged the assembled historians to rise up and take control of the schools of architecture. Peter Banham had just taken his position as historian at the school of University College London; he polemically distributed copies of *Archigram 4*, the comic-book style "Amazing Archigram." Perhaps surprisingly relative to this Harvard lecture, I repeated my 1963 London lecture on "Architecture and Tradition," a Popperian confrontation with the enthusiastic historiography of Banham.⁴ Delivered at Cranbrook, it was the initiation of comradery with Colin Rowe.

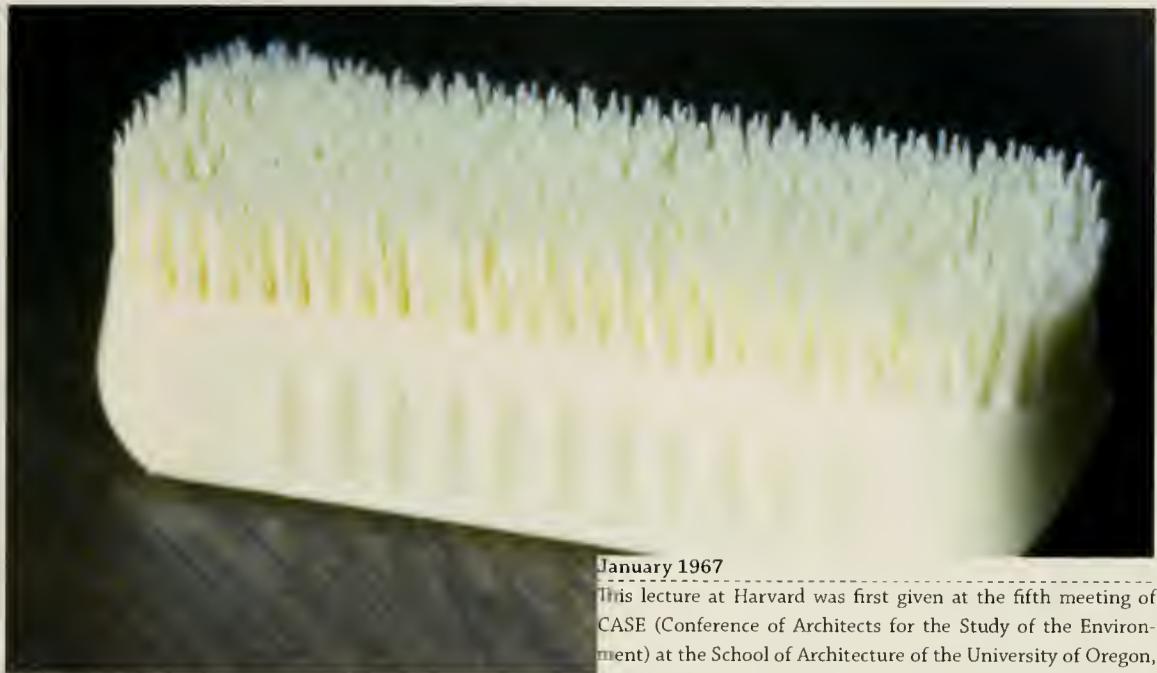
03: Bongo Basket

Bongo Basket, on sale 1966. Bongo products were made by Deka Plastics, Inc., of Elizabeth, New Jersey, using a European double mold system. The white interior with its integral stripe is called the "primary," the product of a first mold. The primary is placed in a second mold where the colored plastic is injected; the heat of this new plastic fuses with the primary. The protrusion of the primary through the thickness of the bowl or basket bonds the two surfaces and provides integral ornament.⁵ The photograph of the Bongo Bowl (fig. 2) also shows the translucent quality of the product.

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02

03



04

January 1967

This lecture at Harvard was first given at the fifth meeting of CASE (Conference of Architects for the Study of the Environment) at the School of Architecture of the University of Oregon, Eugene. Members of CASE at the time, though not all present in Oregon, were: Anderson, Anthony Eardley, Peter Eisenman, Kenneth Frampton, Michael Graves, Stephen Kliment, Donlyn Lyndon, Michael McKinnell, Richard Meier, Henry Millon, Oscar Newman, Gio Pasanella, Jaquelin Robertson, Colin Rowe, Robert Slutsky, Carlos Vallhonrat, and Thomas Vreeland.

04: One-piece plastic brush

Purchased 1966. Further identification lost.

15

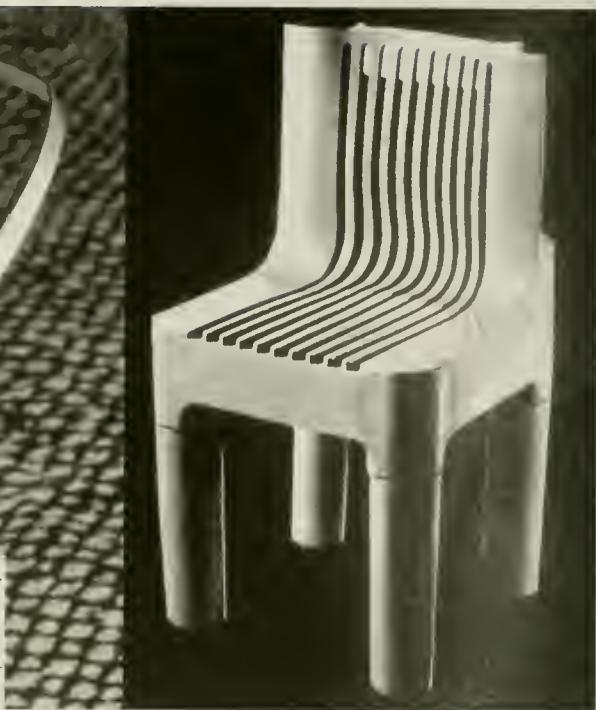


05: Plastic cooler

Purchased 1966. Further identification lost.

06: Stacking child's chair, Marco Zanuso

Designed 1964. Produced by Kartell, model 4999.





March 12, 1967

17

Concerning the CBS program *At Home 2001*, "Walter Cronkite—the sober even-keeled voice of reason—is promising that disposable dishes, robot maids and inflatable furniture are coming to a home near you. 'Sounds preposterous,' Cronkite tells his audience with a barely perceptible smile, 'but some people are convinced it will happen.'"⁶

07

07: Blow Chair

Blow Chair. The first mass-produced inflatable chair is designed by Gionatan De Pas, Donato D'Urbino, and Paolo Lomazzi in 1967 and produced by Zonatta since 1968 (in the design collection of the Museum of Modern Art and other major museums). Inexpensive in 1968, the current price is \$618 plus shipping.



08: Interior of SAs apartment, 1967

My Bongo-Bowled apartment on Boston Harbor is shown in October 1967 with rigid plastic chairs by Sergio Mazza, manufactured by Artemide. Some inconsistency in the Persian rugs? By 1968 a clear plastic Blow Chair had joined the scene. These and all my new objects have been sold or jettisoned. Would that I still had them, as heirlooms.

08

Sometime in the early 1970s, Arthur Drexler, Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art, talked with me about a possible exhibition of plastic artifacts, but this interest emerged only in some additions to the permanent collection.



19

09: Articulated yogurt spoons

2007: Wondrous objects continue to appear. These (perhaps) Icelandic folding spoons, scaled to a yogurt (skyr) package, have a strong integral hinge and are detailed to lock in either the open or closed position (MS Iceland Dairies, Selfoss, Iceland).

To the Editor of the Army and Navy Journal:

20

Sir:—As a history of the recent disaster of the U.S. steamer Housatonic may be of interest to your readers, I will attempt a brief statement of facts:

On the evening of February 17th, the Housatonic was anchored outside the bar, two and a half miles from the ruins of Sumter—her usual station on the blockade. There was but a little wind or sea, the sky was cloudless and the moon shining brightly. A slight mist rested on the water...

At about 8.45 of the first watch, the officer of the deck discovered, while looking in the direction of Breach Inlet battery, a slight disturbance of the water, like that produced by a porpoise... The officers and men were promptly on deck, but by this time the submarine machine was so near us that its form and the phosphorescent lights produced by its motion through the water were plainly visible...

The chain had been slipped and the engines had just begun to move when the crash came, throwing timbers and splinters into the air, and apparently blowing off the entire stern of the vessel. This was immediately followed by a fearful rushing of water, the rolling out of a dense, black smoke from the stack and the settling of the vessel...

It was the opinion of all who saw the strange craft that it was very nearly or entirely under water, that there was no smoke-stack, that it was from twenty to thirty feet in length, and that it was noiseless in its motion through the water. It was not seen after the explosion...

X., Off Charleston, Feb. 22, 1864

Mobilis in Mobile: The Hunley, the Nautilus, and the Ethics of the Portable Atmos

By James D. Graham

The sinking of the Union steamer *Housatonic* by the confederate submarine H.L. *Hunley*—breathlessly described above by an anonymous Union sailor—is widely considered to be the first successful wartime attack by manned submarine, and though the vessel was but one in a storied lineage of undersea experiments, the *Hunley*'s exploits nevertheless constitute the crossing of a certain threshold in the human occupation of the ocean. No longer were navies confined to the surface; the submarine allowed them to extend their spatial politics into the subsurface arena, to make habitable (and, thus, to make contestable) the oceanic deep. The *Hunley* itself—which had a serially tragic history of longitudinal imbalance and whose wreck would not be raised from the Charleston Harbor until August 8, 2000—had been thrown off kilter by the successful explosion of the torpedo it had left rammed into the *Housatonic*'s keel; still watertight, it became lodged in the mud of the harbor where the crew asphyxiated.² The portable atmosphere that had enabled the submarine's successes had reached its limit and ultimately failed the crew, their collective breath exhausted, as had fatally happened twice before in training mishaps.

The underwater world has always been a source of anxiety for sailors and landlubbers alike. Poseidon was a fickle god to be feared and mistrusted; his underwater kingdom was not to be penetrated without consequence, and this dictum—simultaneously pragmatic and moral—remained intact through much of the 19th century. The surge of submarine development seen by the American Civil War, particularly in the Confederate South, brought those qualms (which, by the early 20th century, would be largely dispelled) into sharp focus. The portable atmos of the submarine, then, broke down pre-existing symmetries of power as well as the accepted codes of "civil" naval warfare; surface vessels found themselves at the mercy of the unseen, while the submarine occupied "a safer, though perhaps less honorable po-

sition."³ Or as Herman Melville wrote, evoking these newfound anxieties of the traditional sailor in a changing arena of combat, "The shark / Glides white through the phosphorus sea."⁴

"At first we feel nothing, we are insensitive, we are naturalized," writes Bruno Latour in an essay simply entitled "Air": "And then suddenly we feel not something, but the absence of something we did not know before could possibly be lacking." Following Peter Sloterdijk, he describes the German Army's gas attacks on the Allied Forces' position at Ypres in April of 1915; at that instant, he argues, "air has entered the list of what could be withdrawn from us... air has been made *explicit*, air has been reconfigured."⁵ This is not an empirical outlook—quantification is irrelevant here—but rather a subtractive one wherein the experience of removal expresses an environment defined less by what it is than by how it changes. A dependency is revealed, illustrating an ecological system comprised of what Sloterdijk calls "spheres"—seemingly autonomous yet contingent spaces within spaces.

To contest the precise originary moment of the emergence of Latour and Sloterdijk's "explicit atmosphere" is beside the point, although a particular episode in the *Hunley*'s history—some fifty years before Ypres, in January 1864—offers a striking instance of this ethereal reconfiguration. Aware of the need to stay submerged for as much of an attack as possible while also recognizing the potential for asphyxiation, the *Hunley*'s crew set out to determine how long their oxygen supply could last without replenishment. With no reliable scientific measure, the strategy was to simply sink the boat in a back bay of Charleston Harbor and wait until the crew could no longer breathe—an experiment that seems as psychological as it was physical. The anecdote comes via W. A. Alexander, one of few who served on the submarine without losing his life in one of its many mishaps:

Dixon and myself and several of the crew compared watches, noted the time, and sank for the test. In twenty-five minutes after I had closed the after manhead and excluded the outer air the candle would not burn... Each man had determined that he would not be the first to say 'up'. Not a word was said, except the occasional, 'How is it,' between Dixon and myself, until as the voice of one man, the word 'up' came from all nine.⁶

Their return to the surface—already urgent—was delayed by a clogged pump that prohibited the ballast tank from expelling its weighty water; and as Alexander frantically dug seaweed from the valve, the imminent lack of breathable oxygen was desperately felt.

Thick darkness prevailed. All hands had already endured what they thought was the utmost limit. Some of the crew had almost lost control of themselves. It was a terrible few minutes, 'better imagined than described.' We soon had the boat to the surface and the manhead opened. Fresh air! What an experience!⁷

The *Hunley* had been resting at the bottom of the back bay for two hours and thirty-five minutes, a length of time that almost borders on the apocryphal.⁸ These two hours and thirty-five minutes constituted the bodily tolerance of the craft, the atmospheric limit of habitability. Moreover, though, the crew of the *Hunley* experienced the removal and reconfiguration of air—that desperate “ecstasy of fumbling,” that waterless drowning of gas-shelled soldiers so chillingly described by Wilfred Owen—that critical moment when air becomes explicit.⁹

The functionality of the submarine, of course, demands that the reconfiguration of air is never sensed. Rather, like an airliner, it strives towards the illusion that its borrowed air is equivalent to that of terra firma—a potentially dangerous deception. The addition of air, of breathable space, into water results in an autonomous environment that enables the human occupation of the marine world. The membrane of the vessel is a second skin, an absolute division that allows air to be transferred across the threshold of the surface and be imported into the unlike element of water. It is through this insertion—or, rather, this packaging—of a portable atmosphere that water becomes a habitable element, a new territory to be explored, mapped, and, if necessary, fought over.¹⁰

From the habitable leviathan that Jonah occupied for three days to the oft-depicted diving bell of Alexander the Great (among the more plausible of his many legends,

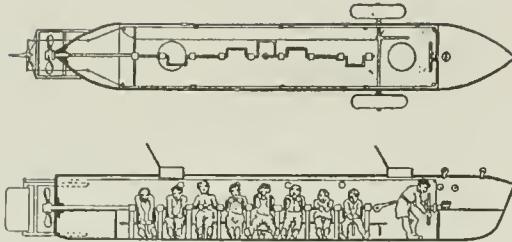
the images of which excite a certain participatory voyeurism towards the surrounding marine life), the ability to exist underwater has had, for much of human history, a somewhat mystical or mythical cast to it.¹¹ The seventeenth century saw studies that began to lend scientific tangibility to these feats of "magic"; Robert Boyle, for one, posited in 1660 that, "there is in the air a little vital quintessence (if I may call it so) which serves to the refreshment and restoration of our vital spirits."¹² Having been made knowable, could air not be made controllable and given new sorts of boundaries?

The history of the submarine is long and circuitous, but the invention's importation to America can be credited to David Bushnell; a civilian, he constructed a curious contraption that engaged in three failed attempts at sinking British ships in 1776. It was known as the "Turtle" because of its ungainly shape, but like a turtle (and like a nautilus) it carries its home with it—a portable, protective, and relatively self-contained shell. Piloting Bushnell's vessel required extreme physical strength and manual dexterity—its operation was as delicate and complex as that of a marionette, with stakes much higher; attempts to train others to use it failed because of the extreme bodily intimacy required with the craft. It was an atmosphere for one; like the diving bell, it contained a personalized pocket of air—essentially, a captured and contained bubble.¹³ The next generation of submersibles—embodied in Robert Fulton's *Nauutilus* of 1798, essentially an elongation of the "Turtle"—was likewise a vessel of intensely physical heroics. Though future submarines would begin to display hierarchies of labor and divide the "mind" from the "muscle," these early experiments were highly individuated.

Many submarine designs of the Civil War era include a snorkel or a flexible air tube connected to a buoy, allowing continual—if slight—replenishment of fresh air. An exercise in minimal tolerances, the *Hunley* includes no such provision for its



01 and 06 Alphonse de Neuville. Illustration for Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, 1875



02

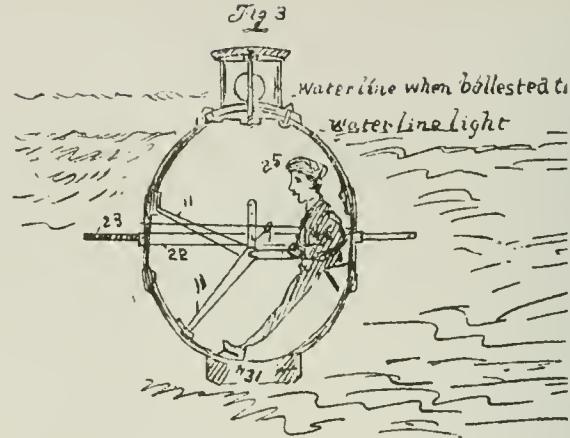
Charles Hasker Drawing, from *McClure's Magazine* (Jan 1899).

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crew of eight; in his reminiscences of the vessel, W.A. Alexander spends pages describing the iron shell, the ballast control, the navigational systems, the hand-cranked propulsion, and the torpedoes themselves at great length, reserving only his final sentence for the issue of ventilation: "On each end was an elbow with a 4 foot length of 1 1/2 inch pipe, and keyed to the hollow shaft; on the inside was a lever with a stop-cock to admit air," operable only when running on the surface.¹⁴ The wisdom of this system is certainly debatable, since three full crews perished on board, more often due to asphyxiation in the airless shell than due to leakage and drowning. But it speaks to an urge towards self-containment (and the false security that it provides); the Hunley is a sealed environment unto itself, free to move as it chooses for the duration of those two hours and thirty-five minutes of breathable air.

Jules Verne's novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, first published in 1866, can be read as a response to the American Civil War and as a critique of these shifting terrains of underwater weaponry.¹⁵ Verne captures a sense of atmospheric autonomy in the motto that Captain Nemo attaches to his crest: *mobilis in mobile*, which Verne translates as "mobile in the mobile element."¹⁶ Nemo's submarine—the *Nautilus*—is based in part on Fulton's *Nautilus*, of which Verne, an avid reader of scientific periodicals, would surely have been aware. The ability to penetrate the fluid depths presents the sea as a new landscape awaiting territorialization. To "reconfigure" air is, then, more than a simply biological phenomenon; it is a political and spatial act. We see this in the trenches at Ypres and in the Charleston harbor; Verne, too, sees that the autonomy granted by the portable atmos has an actively political dimension, as expressed here by Captain Nemo:

It was through the sea that the globe as it were began, and who knows



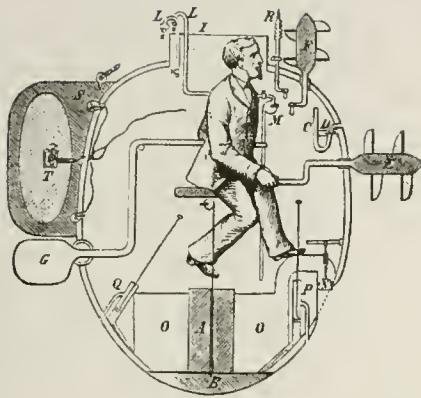
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W.A. Alexander. Cross-sectional sketch of the Hunley, 2002

*if it will not end in the sea! Perfect peace abides there. The sea does not belong to despots. On its surface immoral rights can still be claimed, men can still fight each other, devour each other, and carry out all the earth's atrocities. But thirty feet below the surface their power ceases, their influence fades, their authority disappears. Ah, sir, live, live in the heart of the sea! Independence is possible only here!*¹⁷

And yet, as the story continues, we come to realize that the separation is never so clean and independence is never complete. Nemo claims, "Oh, I could manufacture all the air I need for my consumption, but that would be pointless," so like the *Hunley* and so many vessels before it, the *Nautilus'* existence below the sea is contingent on its ability to make contact with the surface, to replenish its artificial lungs using "powerful pumps that store air in special tanks."¹⁸ Likewise, Nemo's utopian vision of an unpeopled, underwater paradise is continually undercut by a series of vengeful contacts with the surface-dwelling world—his existence is that of a guerilla rather than of a hermit.¹⁹ Unable to sever all connection to the air above the waves and discontent to simply reject an earthly life, he finds himself obliged to crest the surface and unseal the hatches, irresistibly drawn (like W. A. Alexander) towards the experience of fresh air as well as towards arena of terrestrial society.

This messy and failed disengagement from society brought on by the autonomous atmosphere of the submarine raises issues both ethical and legal. As Walter Benjamin notes, "One might perhaps consider the surprising possibility that the law's interest in a monopoly of violence vis-à-vis individuals is not explained by the intention of preserving legal ends but, rather, by that of preserving the law itself; that violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens it not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law."²⁰ The invention of the submarine, then, endangers not only surface ships but also



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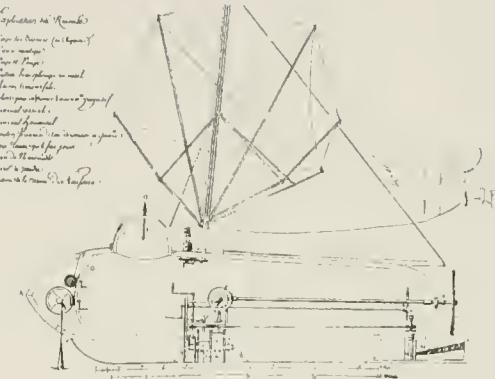
David Bushnell's *Turtle*: an atmosphere for one.

the entire regulating structure of law and potentially empowers the fragmentation of prevailing social structures; in this sense, the politics of the submarine can be seen as microcosmic of the politics of the separatist South itself.²¹ Governments—whose instincts always tend towards self-preservation—thus rejected this new instrument of war until their hands were forced by the Civil War; the submarine's autonomy challenged and potentially undermined the conventional wartime codes of gentlemanly comportment at sea as well as the legitimacy and boundaries of federalized governance.

Robert Fulton—who built the previously mentioned *Nautilus* (based largely on Bushnell's "Turtle") and whose treatise on torpedo warfare bore the epigram "The Liberty of the Sea will be the Happiness of the Earth"—argues that the ultimate power of submarines (and, moreover, the fear of running afoul of their terrible potential) make them a regulatory and preventative deterrent rather than an offensive presence:²²

All wars are barbarous, and particularly wars of offence... If Torpedoes should prevent such acts of violence, the invention must be humane... I have viewed military marines as remains of ancient warlike habits, and an existing political disease, for which there has hitherto been no specific remedy. Satisfied in my own mind, that the Torpedoes now discovered, will be an effectual cure for so great an evil.²³

Realizing, though, that his invention, should it prove successful, would be seen as a weapon of murder rather than a weapon of war, Fulton (who, being something of a mercenary, attempted to sell his technology to the French government with little success) demanded that the crew of his *Nautilus* receive commissions under the military so that they would receive treatment in kind. This demand was rebuffed.²⁴ Hunley—like Fulton, a civilian—also realized that his planned attack went against the conventions of



05

Robert Fulton's *Nautilus*.

warfare; in one requisition, he asked to be supplied with "nine gray jackets, three to be trimmed in gold braid. Circumstances: that the men for whom they are ordered are on a special secret service and that it is necessary that they be clothed in Confederate Army uniform."²⁵ His hope was that by being plainly identifiable as Confederate soldiers, this method of attack would thus be legitimized. Of course, a uniform alone would hardly change the opinions of the captors; not until submarines became a convention of war (thus restoring a sense of militaristic symmetry) would it no longer be seen as murderous and ignoble.²⁶

A decade after the *Hunley*'s exploits, J.R. McClinton (one of its inventors) revisits not the singular event of the sinking of the *Housatonic* but rather considers the potential of the breed of warfare he helped develop: "Since the war, I have thought over the subject considerable, and am satisfied that the Power can easily be obtained...to make the submarine Boat the most formidable enemy of Marine warfare ever known."²⁷ His phrasing crucially echoes Fulton's pacific optimism; the submarine is not the enemy of the ship but an enemy of the larger *institution* of marine warfare. By annexing the subsurface space of the ocean, the submarine has a powerful ability to reconfigure war and the traditional navy.

This power, whether harnessed for instruments of war or for humanitarian knowledge and protection, comes at the cost of an entirely new sort of corporeal vulnerability; the submarine creates a dependency on technology for protection as well as the very sustenance of life itself. This portable environment—so seemingly autonomous but also ceaselessly contingent on access to the surface, to the air now made explicit—has expanded the frontiers of human occupation, first to the sea and later to the sky, limited only by our breathtaking ambition.

25

On Deck for Abortion Rights: Women on Waves Sails to Portugal

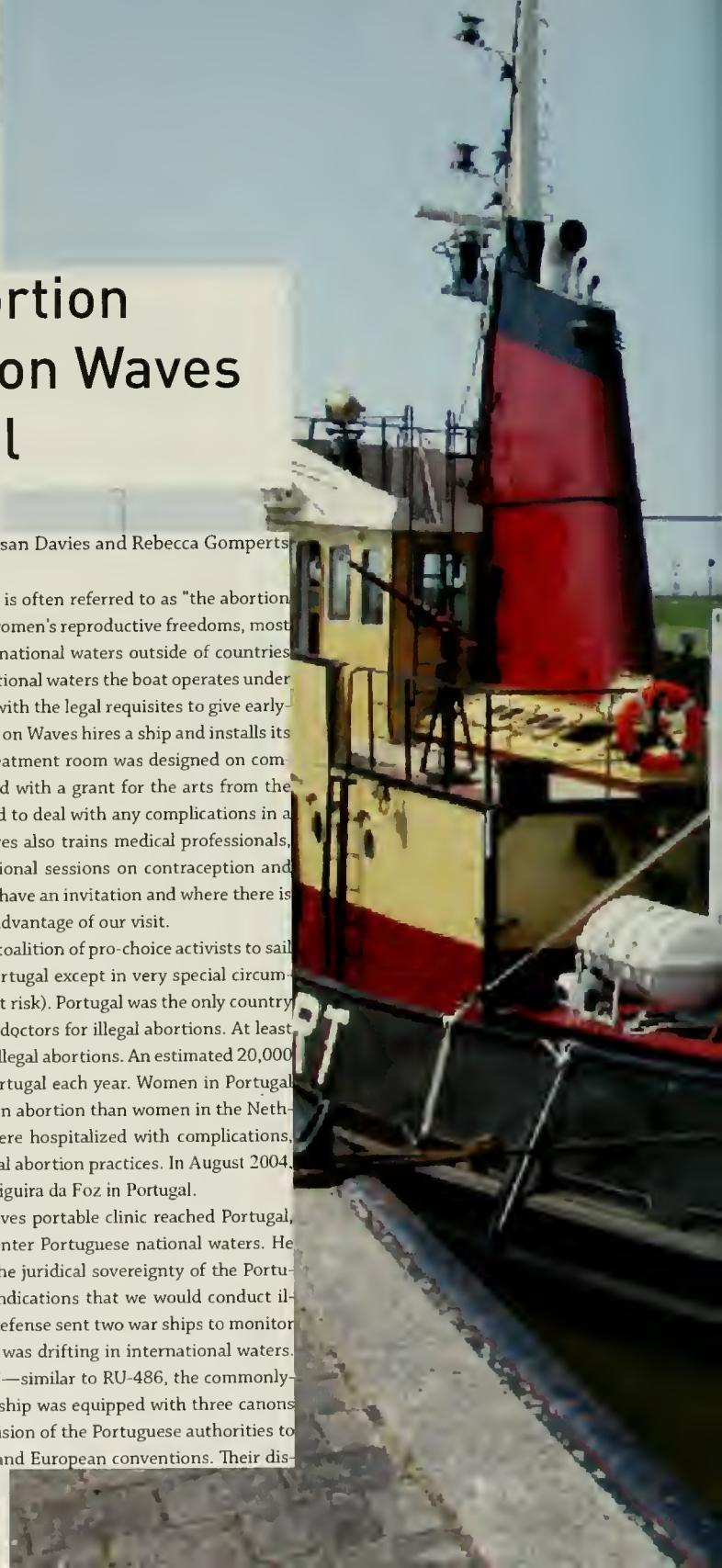
By Susan Davies and Rebecca Gomperts

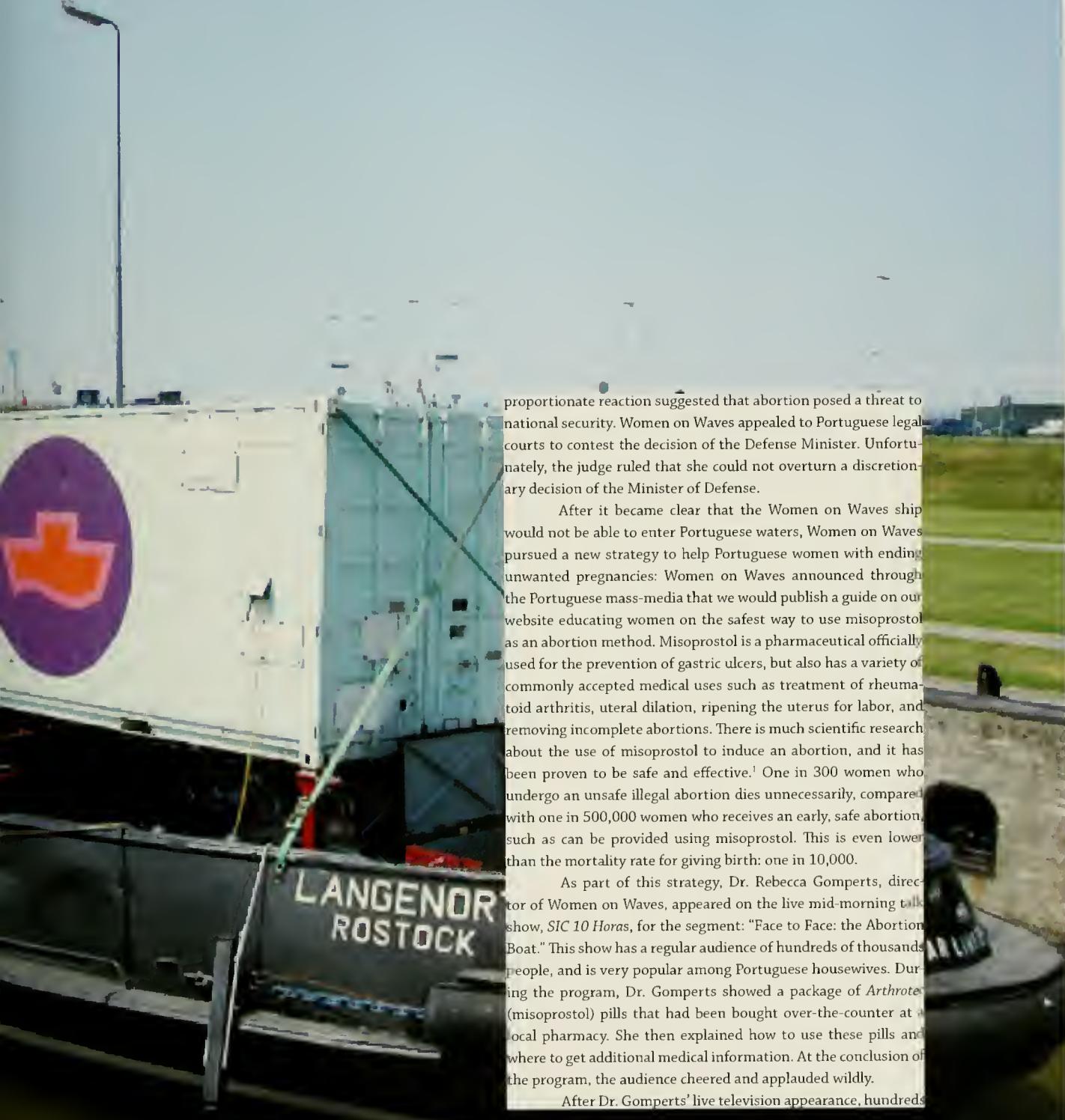
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Women on Waves, a Dutch non-profit organization, is often referred to as "the abortion boat." We use innovative methods to campaign for women's reproductive freedoms, most famously sailing our mobile abortion clinic to international waters outside of countries where there is no access to safe abortions. In international waters the boat operates under Dutch law, and the mobile clinic on board complies with the legal requisites to give early term medical abortions. For each campaign, Women on Waves hires a ship and installs its mobile treatment room on the deck. The mobile treatment room was designed on commission by the artist Joep Van Lieshout and funded with a grant for the arts from the Dutch government. The treatment room is equipped to deal with any complications in a safe and medically proper manner. Women on Waves also trains medical professionals, participates in art performances, and gives educational sessions on contraception and STD prevention. We only sail to countries where we have an invitation and where there is a network of local grassroots organizations to take advantage of our visit.

In 2004, Women on Waves was invited by a coalition of pro-choice activists to sail to Portugal. At that time, abortion was illegal in Portugal except in very special circumstances (such as rape or when the woman's life was at risk). Portugal was the only country within the EU that actively prosecuted women and doctors for illegal abortions. At least 25 women had been recently prosecuted for having illegal abortions. An estimated 20,000 to 40,000 unsafe abortions were taking place in Portugal each year. Women in Portugal were therefore 150 times more likely to die due to an abortion than women in the Netherlands. Each year, approximately 5000 women were hospitalized with complications, and about two to five women died from unsafe illegal abortion practices. In August 2004, Women on Waves sailed to the small holiday town Figueira da Foz in Portugal.

When the ship bearing the Women on Waves portable clinic reached Portugal, the Portuguese Minister of Defense forbade it to enter Portuguese national waters. He claimed that Women on Waves was undermining the juridical sovereignty of the Portuguese state, because the media had given strong indications that we would conduct illegal activities inside the country. The Minister of Defense sent two war ships to monitor the Women on Waves ship 24 hours a day while it was drifting in international waters. Ironically, one of the warships was named the F486—similar to RU-486, the commonly used name for the mifepristone abortion pill. This ship was equipped with three canons and two torpedo launchers. In our opinion, the decision of the Portuguese authorities to blockade Women on Waves violated international and European conventions. Their dis-





proportionate reaction suggested that abortion posed a threat to national security. Women on Waves appealed to Portuguese legal courts to contest the decision of the Defense Minister. Unfortunately, the judge ruled that she could not overturn a discretionary decision of the Minister of Defense.

After it became clear that the Women on Waves ship would not be able to enter Portuguese waters, Women on Waves pursued a new strategy to help Portuguese women with ending unwanted pregnancies: Women on Waves announced through the Portuguese mass-media that we would publish a guide on our website educating women on the safest way to use misoprostol as an abortion method. Misoprostol is a pharmaceutical officially used for the prevention of gastric ulcers, but also has a variety of commonly accepted medical uses such as treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, uterine dilation, ripening the uterus for labor, and removing incomplete abortions. There is much scientific research about the use of misoprostol to induce an abortion, and it has been proven to be safe and effective.¹ One in 300 women who undergo an unsafe illegal abortion dies unnecessarily, compared with one in 500,000 women who receives an early, safe abortion such as can be provided using misoprostol. This is even lower than the mortality rate for giving birth: one in 10,000.

As part of this strategy, Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, director of Women on Waves, appeared on the live mid-morning talk show, *SIC 10 Horas*, for the segment: "Face to Face: the Abortion Boat." This show has a regular audience of hundreds of thousands of people, and is very popular among Portuguese housewives. During the program, Dr. Gomperts showed a package of *Arthrotec* (misoprostol) pills that had been bought over-the-counter at a local pharmacy. She then explained how to use these pills and where to get additional medical information. At the conclusion of the program, the audience cheered and applauded wildly.

After Dr. Gomperts' live television appearance, hundreds

of desperate Portuguese women contacted the Women on Waves hotline to request the instructions. The Women on Waves website currently receives more than 60,000 unique visitors every month. Our misoprostol manual is available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Polish. A multilingual volunteer team has been established to answer questions from women all over the world, about the correct use of misoprostol including the risks involved, post-abortion care, and general reproductive health. The volunteers now answer around 2500 e-mails requesting assistance annually. Those requesting assistance include people from all walks of life, from female soldiers based in Iraq to housewives in Brazil. These women are now receiving sound advice about medical abortions and reproductive health, in part because of the actions of the Portuguese Ministry of Defense and its military blockade.

According to an opinion poll done by *Expresso*, a popular Lisbon daily paper, 64% of Portuguese citizens polled consider the visit of the Women on Waves ship positive and useful. The ship's arrival and the reaction of the Portuguese government received at least 20 hours of television coverage, and was reported in more than 700 newspapers articles in Portugal, and internationally by numerous international news agencies including CNN, Al-Jazeera, BBC, Time Magazine, the International Herald Tribune.

In early December 2004, two months after the ship's visit to Portugal, the Portuguese president Jorge Sampaio dissolved the Portuguese government. During the election campaign for the new government, one main issue was support for a new referendum on abortion. The Socialist Party won the new elections in February 2005. Abortion was one of the election's decisive issues. Not coincidentally, the main architect of the Socialist Party campaign was the Commissioner of Justice for the European Parliament who accepted the complaint of Women on Waves against the actions of the Portuguese government.

In February 2007, a popular referendum was held to allow the public to decide whether or not to change the abortion law. The Portuguese organization Doctors for Choice, formed during the Women on Waves Portugal campaign, played an integral part in winning over public opinion. Turnout was about 40%. Although this was far less than the 50% required to alter the law, of those who did vote, 59.3% backed a proposed change to the current law. In early March, the Portuguese parliament approved the law that legalizes abortion up to 10 weeks of the pregnancy term.

The Women on Waves Portugal campaign was originally intended to open public debate within Portugal and to help energize the local struggle for reproductive rights. The end result was much greater. Although Women on Waves was not able to provide any abortions in our mobile, sea-bound clinic, the end result of the campaign was that abortion was not only de-penalized, but was actually legalized in Portugal. Additionally, now women all over the world are more likely to have a safe abortion because there is reliable information about how to use misoprostol, and there is a support system available to women for whom misoprostol is the safest option. Women on Waves, in its struggle to save women's lives through increasing access to safe abortions, crosses many borders—international borders by sea and cyberspace, interdisciplinary borders by combining grassroots organizing, institutional politics, art, medicine, direct action, media campaigns, and abortion provision.

Free and Offshore: Saud Sharaf / Megaport

By Nadia M. Alhasani

Scenario I: When natural land is scarce, artificial islands become a viable option. Floating entities can receive expanding city services that cannot be accommodated for within the normal city limits. They share the open seas with other man-made floating entities, namely oil rigs, supertankers and cruise liners that provide for particular living conditions. Whereas Kansai airport provides for runways where land is scarce, Dubai's Palm Island provides for much sought-after waterfront property and luxury living; thus expanding the land's physical and geographical boundaries within a political domain. This strategy allows for land expansion outside the existing realms of a state that is custom-built to meet particular programmatic requirements without disrupting the existing infrastructure.

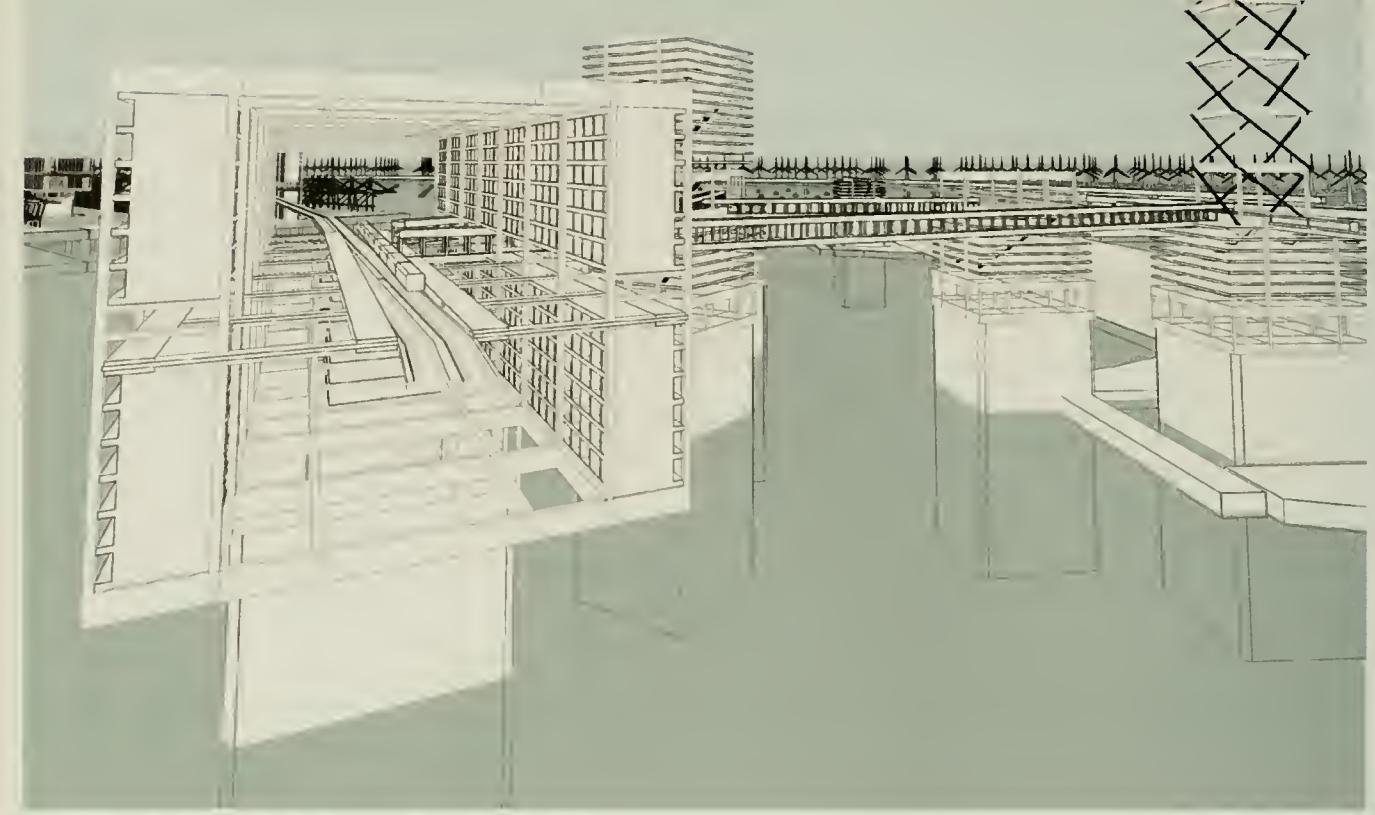
Scenario II: Global commerce today has changed how production is achieved and business is conducted. The transnational corporation, whether its focus is on information technology, finance, trade or manufacturing, has emerged as a model of standard practice in the 21st century. Moreover, the need to accommodate faster responses and to implement more culturally appropriate practices has shifted emphasis and expansion plans from Europe and North America to locations deemed more globally central such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Halliburton's recent announcement to relocate its headquarters from Houston to Dubai is one such example. The aim is to be close to the centers of production and consumption, minimizing time and expenditure, while maximizing exposure and revenues.

The realities of today's global economy prompt the search for alternative business practices that merge the need for a central location that is accessible both physically and politically, and allow for state-free rules and regulations that are simultaneously global and specific. Over the past few decades, globalization has forced numerous societies to adopt and adapt to what the phenomenon has to offer; most affected is the business, manufacturing, and

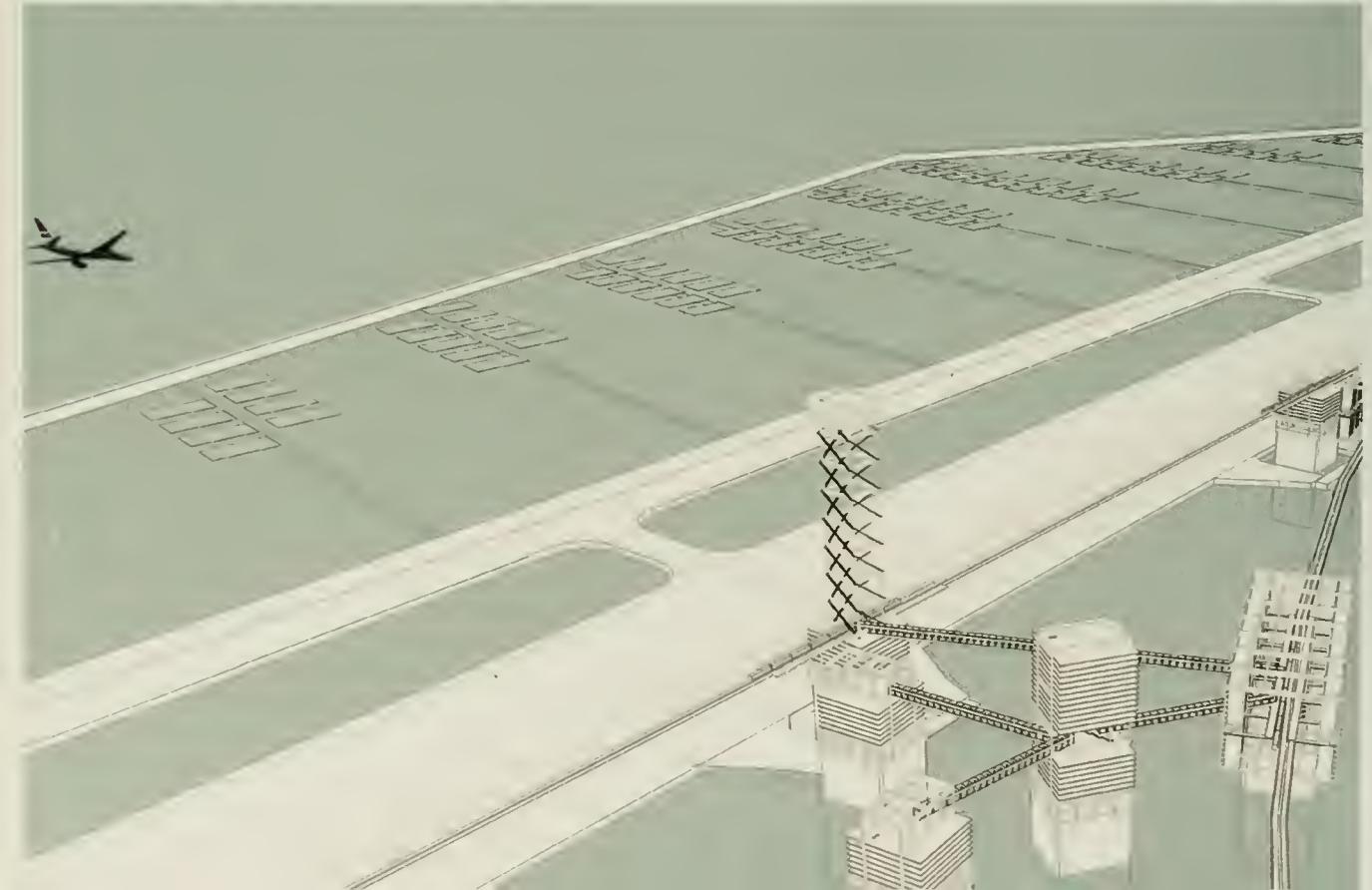
telecommunication sectors. These in turn affected cultural, social and economic practices forcing less industrialized countries and non-European communities to take notice.

It is of interest to note that by the 1990s even such cities as London, renowned as an international financial and insurance center, had to reinvent itself as a global node to remain competitive and current. No longer was the post-colonial condition of the late 19th–early 20th centuries or the post-WWII era adequate to maintain the center. Centrality of location ceased to guarantee attractiveness to global businesses in an age where satellite and internet technologies rule. A bold decision was made to move the traditional center of business from old London to the docklands' Canary Wharf on the city's eastern edge. American designers were invited to create this new business center much to the dismay of British architects and the public at large. The design is a reflection of New York's Financial District in Battery Park in the form of state-of-the-art office buildings providing the desired flexibility in office space, telecommunications and internet services. The final outcome of this move was a surge of transnational corporations setting up their headquarters in London.

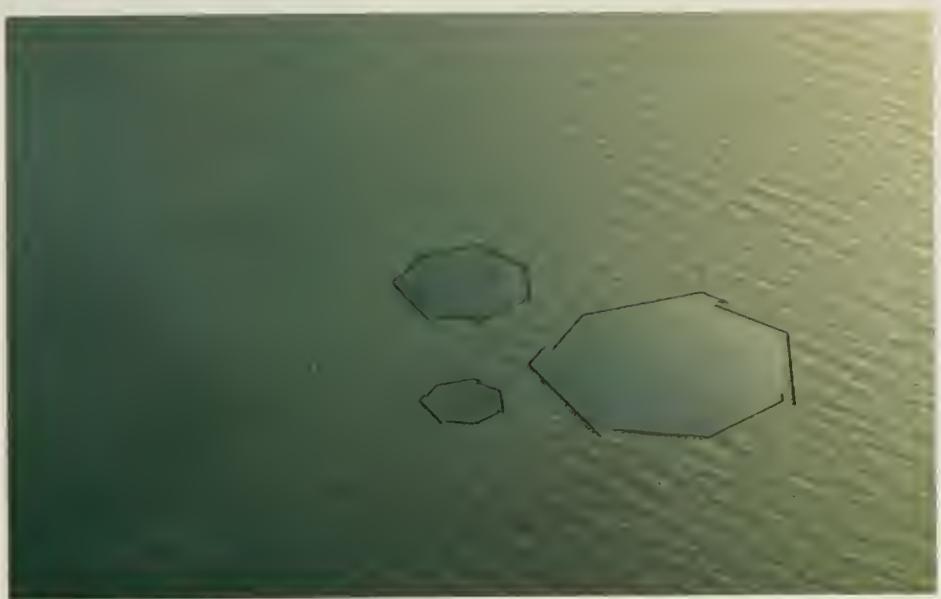
Another established practice of the global business environment in spatial regulation is the increase, in recent years, in the number of free-zones established primarily to provide multi-national corporations with a neutral site that is tax-free and excluded from local and national regulations. These zones provide for a "glocal" regulatory condition in which global regulations are established while maintaining local practices. Dating back to the early 20th century, these free trade zones (FTZ) and export-processing zones (EPZ) focus on the import of raw materials or parts, assembly and manufacturing, and export of finished products and goods (mainly clothing and electronics). They are an opportunity to attract foreign businesses, provide employment for the surrounding population, and contribute to the local economy.



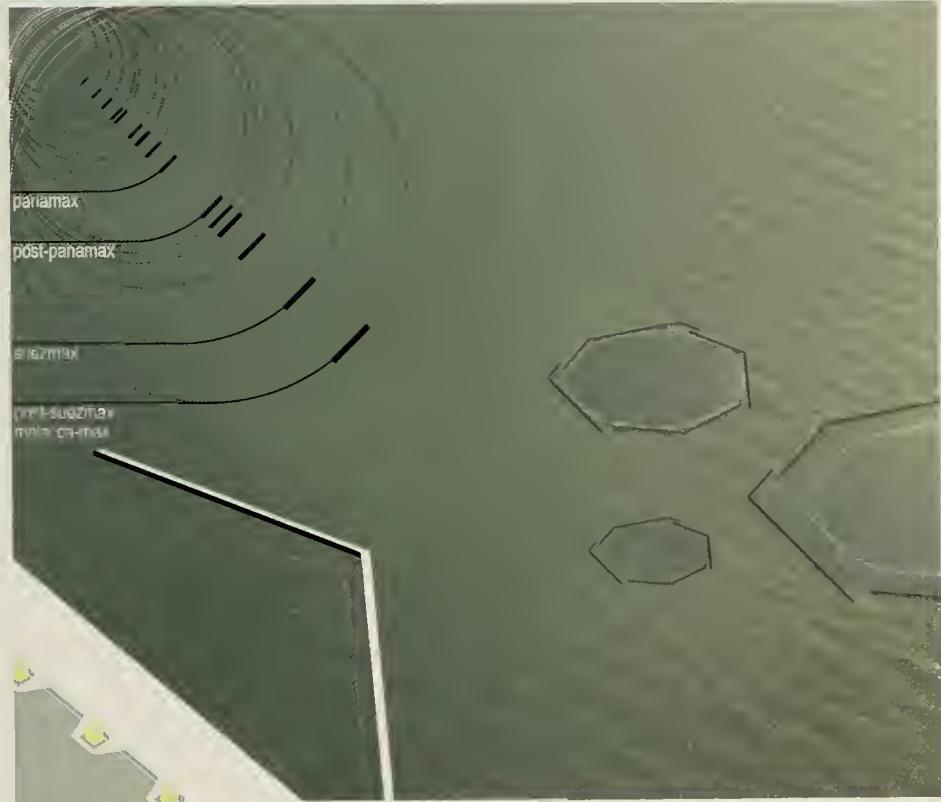
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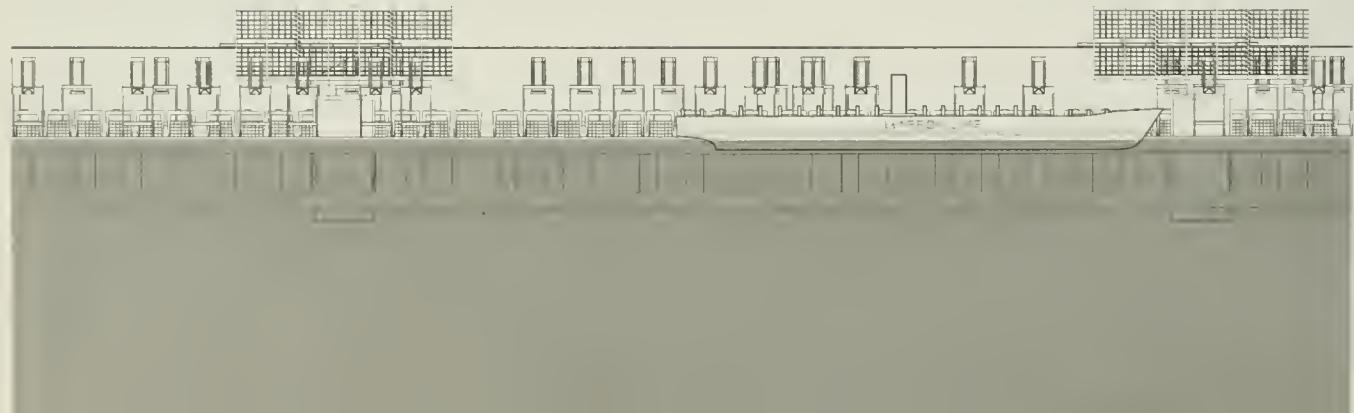
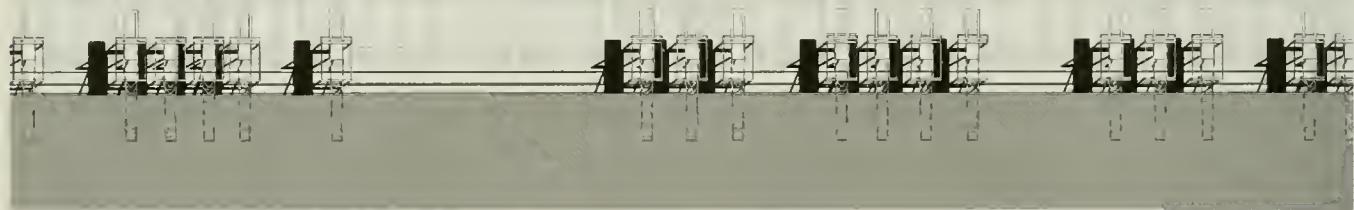
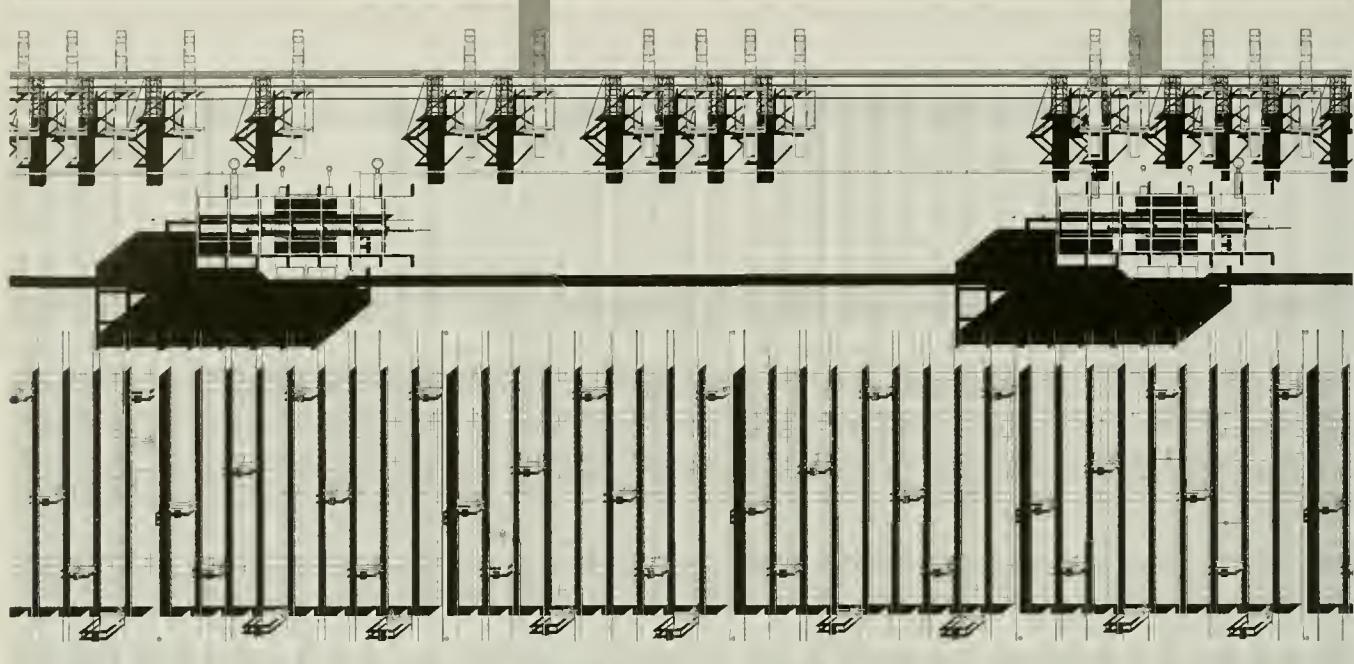
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01 The modular unit is one of a series of moored anchor points on site. The units are connected by a railroad and contain rail stations atop. They form labor redistribution centers, providing accommodation and living amenities. 02 The Megaport airport is a megafloat barge anchored by modular units. The tower, which is located on a moored anchor point, contains the command center (container terminal, airport and security) and information processing center. 03 Megaport: artificial atolls in the Arabian Sea. 04 Design of an offshore marina: the system is based on L-form breakwaters and the radius of turning of post-Panamax ships.

05 The Megaport container terminal is designed with two quays: the ultra large containerships quay and the feeder ships quay. The modular units form anchor points along the terminal barge. Illustrated is the Emma Maersk, the largest containership to date, berthing at the ultra large containerships quay.



By the beginning of the 21st century, approximately 3000 free trade zones worldwide were employing 43 million people in 116 countries. Today, most of the emerging free zones are in states and cities that are re-creating themselves as the ideal locations for global trade—both in terms of distribution and transportation nodes. These free zones have turned into lucrative ventures attracting all kinds of businesses.

In the United Arab Emirates, Dubai pioneered the industrial free-zone concept with Jebel Ali Free Zone Authority (JAFZA) in 1985. Dubai has since established such free zones as Dubai Health Care City, Dubai Internet City, Dubai Media City, Knowledge Village, and is planning for other more specialized free zones like Dubai Auto Parts City, Dubai Flower Center, and Dubai Textile Village amongst others. These free zones claim to offer 100% foreign ownership, complete exemption of taxes, customs and commercial levies, full repatriation of capital and profits, and extended leases. This has attracted hundreds of international and transnational companies to the emirate. The success of these efforts has prompted other emirates to follow suit.

Parallel to the development of free zones is the development of ports in the Arabian Gulf and Arabian Sea that contribute to both the region's economic diversification and its claim on the global container-handling market. They advertise themselves as transshipment hubs capable of catering to the ever-increasing traffic of containerships. However, the physical realities of the ports themselves coupled with the economies of scale suggest that there are logistical and physical limits to these hubs in spite of the ideal central location. The historical trade routes that crossed the region from Asia to Europe and Africa (routes that transported silk, spices, tea, incense, etc.), sought established land routes linking various nodes, large and small. These often provided for *khans*—a building type that is a hotel, stable and trading post in one—that provided for food and shelter, security and commerce. Today's Arabia is positioned to reactivate its water routes and reopen it for global trade between the east and west.

Saud Sharaf's *Megaport* design proposal offers an alternative to this vision replacing the *khan* or commercial port of the past with an offshore node, a hybrid between an oilrig and a supertanker. It offers a new physical solution tied in with the global realities of transnational trade—collapsing the free-zone port and manmade island into one entity, and addressing the particular physical specifications of containerships while catering to the

needs of free-zone businesses. This strategy offers a solution that saves precious land for typical living and work activities, while allowing a nation-state to expand its economic activities beyond its standard practices.

More importantly, the construction of a megaport in the Arabian Sea responds to the obvious lack of a transshipment super-port in the region. Rather than having each nation-state promote their own version of a port that would still fall short of the optimum requirements; the aim is to consolidate them into one megaport similar to other business mergers. Furthermore, the ownership of the facility would follow the current trend of a multinational group overseeing its administration and promoting its business globally. This allows for the much-needed economy of scale to maintain a profitable enterprise and reduce the pressure on the infrastructure of each of the nation-states involved. Politically, the model allows for a collaborative spirit among the various nation-states in support of a stable regional environment. This also allows for the development of a series of nodes along a particular navigational route between the production points and consumer markets. These nodes are now available to numerous states that can join resources to enter the megaport scenario as individual or multiple legitimate shareholders.

Portability of people and goods is at the frontier of today's global business as the process aims to maximize revenues and minimize expenses. It is a process that seeks to optimize time and resources while promoting mobility and flexibility. Aided by the rapid developments in internet and satellite technology, business has dictated a particular construct to meet its ever-evolving demands. It pushes for particular programmatic and spatial requirements implemented within difficult conditions. Perhaps architecture and engineering too can aggressively and effectively incorporate this technology to lead the way towards promoting structures that would affect the way business is conducted. Megaports and a new nautical route may provide for such points of departure.

Cities of Ports: The Warehousing Act of 1846 and the Centralization of American Commerce

By Gautham Rao

34

But the committee...express[es] not only the universal opinion of the commercial classes, but of enlightened statesmen throughout the country...in considering the adoption of the warehousing system as the commencement of a new era, that would, in the end, place the United States on a level, in its commercial advantages, with the leading nations of Europe, and in competition with them for the commerce of the globe.

- New York City Chamber of Commerce (1850)¹

Why, in the words of the New York City Chamber of Commerce, did a national warehousing system usher in a “new era” for the American economy in late antebellum America? What was it about the storage of commodities in regulated warehouses that would “place the United States...in competition” with Europe, “for the commerce of the globe”? To shed light on these queries, this essay studies the rise and implementation of the federal Warehousing Act of 1846, which placed bonded warehouses in ports throughout the country to house imported commodities.

Antebellum merchants agitated for the Warehouse Act of 1846 for two related reasons. First, warehouses permitted merchants to store their goods while seeking out the most profitable markets for retail sales or, quite commonly, for “re-export,” or sale in a foreign market. Second, merchants would not be liable for customs duties until their goods were removed from the warehouse and a sale was consummated. By protecting mercantile investments and shielding capitalists from taxation, the Warehousing Act was, in effect, a subsidy. As Roger B. Taney opined in 1851, the “evident object” of the act was “to facilitate and encourage commerce by exempting the importer from the payment of duties, until he is ready to bring his goods, into market.”²

As a mercantile subsidy, the Warehousing Act must be understood in the context of the 19th-century global market-

place, which was undergoing what one theorist describes as a “system-wide speed-up” in scope and scale. The policy was, thus, a remarkable example of how statist supervision of borders and boundaries fostered exchange and the accumulation of capital and credit.³ Yet, this was not a static economic geography, nor should the participants of the marketplace be viewed as marionettes. On the other hand, it was the merchants who shaped the implementation of the Warehousing Act to reconfigure the American economic landscape. On the local level, the merchant-state relationship fostered the development of massive new warehouse districts, most notably, the Atlantic Dock Company in Brooklyn, New York. Taken together, these new warehousing districts were the foundation of an emerging national economic hierarchy, in which the great port cities would dominate for decades to come.

This explanation of the regulated nature of movement and the economic landscape in early modern America contests long-standing notions of the supposed—if mythical—laissez-faire 19th century. Beyond this, however, the political-economy of the Warehousing Act of 1846 suggests a nexus with the role of warehouses in the modern, industrial landscape, as documented in Michael Osman’s forthcoming work. In the world system, the establishment and proliferation of sites of accumulation and storage creates the potential for the movement and exchange of commodities. In this way, on a national scale, the very possibility of mobility is very much dependent on states, borders, and institutional regulations, not solely in terms of police and security, but also in the starkly economic terms of capital and credit.⁴

American merchants sensed a shifting market environment in the decade following the War of 1812, as peace reoriented the all-important American import trades toward England. Americans also realized great profits by exporting British imports—“re-



exports"—to Canada, Mexico, and South America. As for exports, the southern cotton kingdom transshipped most of its output to the great industrial mills in England. But this economic geography brought problems as well. Mercantile profits, like mercantile trades, were transnational in nature: long before the electronic architecture of financial exchanges, merchants simply awaited the arrival of their specie. More frequently, though, they would not wait, and enter into new risks and deals on credit. The preeminent example of this arrangement was the payment of customs duties, as merchants forked over taxes to the nation-state on imported goods whose retail future was unknown.⁵

By the late 1830s, momentum had been building among the mid-Atlantic mercantile community for legislation that would mitigate the risks of paying customhouse duties on anticipated, future transactions. The movement was chiefly confined to the merchant elite in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans, where consensus quickly coalesced around the federal bonded warehouse system. As the leading Congressional booster of warehousing, C.C. Cambreleng of New York, put it, government could best protect the merchant from "the contingency of sale for a foreign market" by offering an "entrepot, free of duty, till an opportunity offers to dispose of them."⁶

But the vision became a reality only as late as 1846 with the Warehousing Act, which aimed to accommodate an expected increase in imports in wake of the new tariff law of the same year. The Act itself was rather simple. Importers took out a bond for double the value of their commodities, and, in return, could store their goods in government or private warehouses until ready for consumption, domestic transportation, or re-export. Only when the merchant located a market for the goods, and had money (or stable credit) to pay his taxes, would the customs duties come due. And by all indications, the desired effect was achieved. "The system was a great convenience to importers," notes one historian of tariff policy. By "giving importers a sufficient season in which to dispose of commodities," the Warehousing Act "served to swell the volume of importations during the flush times in the fifties."⁷

Yet, by regulating the movement of goods, the Warehousing Act of 1846 also transformed the geography of the American marketplace. From the start, American merchants understood that the system would disproportionately benefit only the wealthiest Americans. On one hand, suggested Boston magnate Hiram Gray, the overtrading and "excessive variations of imports" would "be, in a great degree, obviated," if goods



house in present-day PUMA, circa 1850.

"spread as formerly over the whole surface of the country," were centralized in the leading ports. Customs officials in New York, and the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, concurred. After all, concluded the former, a national warehousing policy "would increase the *natural tendency* of business to concentrate itself in places affording demand and supply, facilities of intercommunication, large capital, and a market for exchange." In this way, it was believed, warehousing would simply accelerate the "tendency" that had propelled "all commercial history."⁸ The merchants, it turned out, were quite prescient. Within the great ports, the import trades clustered around new warehouse districts that transformed the commercial landscapes of America's metropolises. The same centralizing effect took place on a greater scale as these established ports of entry—Boston, Baltimore, Savannah, New Orleans, and especially New York—in turn monopolized the import trades and their subsidiaries.

In Boston, for instance, "a demand has arisen in Boston for enlarged warehouses," reported E.H. Derby in his booster pamphlet of 1850, resulting in "continuous blocks of brick warehouses, four to five stories high, and fifty to eighty feet deep." Others were "erected of massive granite," and up to one hundred feet in depth. Indeed, official customs records are flush with requests for bonded warehouses on Long Wharf, India Wharf, Central Wharf, Commercial Wharf, and Mercantile Wharf (each of which was primarily operated by a single wharf company). On Long Wharf, for instance, much of this construction was due to the Boston Wharf Company, run in part by Elisha Atkins, himself among the nation's biggest sugar magnates. The Boston Wharf Company, naturally, would reap most of its profits from the holding of sugar and molasses for transshipment to the west coast and abroad. By the dawn of the Civil War, estimated one contemporary, one-fifth of Boston proper would consist of docks, wharves, and warehouses.⁹

Things were a bit more complicated at the South's leading port. The Port of New Orleans had suffered from the gradual loss of its Midwestern supply trade to the east and its expanding web of railroads and canals. But it was also a victim of geography. The city's "magnificent levee, spacious enough to accommodate the commerce of the whole valley," wrote J.D.B. DeBow, "should be covered with warehouse-sheds." But it was very much susceptible to fire and floods and, moreover, seemingly always packed to the brim. One traveler noted that steamboats were forced to "lie with their bows toward the Levee," so that "they do not take

up as much room as if they laid with their sides," as was standard practice. But in New Orleans, "this way of lying" was customary, as was the peculiar sight of unloading vessels "over the bow." Warehouses did pop up in great numbers nonetheless, but they shifted to ancillary commercial centers. Algiers, an emerging railroad hub in Orleans Parish, held a mass of bonded warehouses, the largest of which, the Brooklyn Warehouse Company, possessed 168,000 square feet of storage space.¹⁰

The most dramatic effects of the Warehousing Act of 1846, though, were seen in New York City. From 1846 to 1849, a frenzy of warehouse activity vied to accommodate the city's lucrative import business, valued at over \$20 million per annum. The crush of this business caused a predictable spike in storage prices "in and near Wall Street, where are situated the custom-house, exchange, banks, insurance offices, &c." Thus came along an enterprising group of entrepreneurs, led by James DePeyster Ogdens, who formed the Atlantic Dock Company. The Company proposed to "construct docks, bulkheads, and piers, forming a basin...of about 42 acres, and a hydraulic dock," to hasten unloading of vessels. Rather than the crowded Manhattan waterfront, this new forty-two acres of storage was "on the waterfront...in the city of Brooklyn," in the present-day neighborhoods of Red Hook and Williamsburg.¹¹

Ogden, however, was not new to this story. In fact, as President of the New York Chamber of Commerce, Ogden had directed the campaign to enact the Warehousing Act of 1846. Ogden's financial interest in warehousing began in 1839, when he and fellow investors acquired property on the Brooklyn waterfront. With the legislation of 1846, his wharves were "line [sic] with these large buildings." Once "the first steam grain elevator" was installed, "nearly all the grain business of the metropolis is done at Brooklyn."¹² This was not the only market cornered by the Atlantic Dock Company. In March 1849, the Company's key Congressional backer, Washington Hunt, spoke of "the necessity, under the warehousing system," for the U.S. Government to rent out "ample accommodations for storage." In New York the answer was self-evident. For Representative Hunt, "the public warehouses at Atlantic Dock...afford[ed] many advantages to the importers." But there was also a decidedly public benefit:

By the concentration of a large portion of the storage at the Atlantic dock not only is smuggling more easily prevented or detected, but three or four officers of the customs are enabled to transact the busi-

*ness which would require the attention of thirty or more if the same business were done in distinct warehouses scattered throughout the city, and each requiring an inspector.*¹³

The “concentration” of the warehousing business on the Brooklyn waterfront, attested Hunt, benefited government as much as it did—as Secretary of the Treasury Robert Walker put it some months later—“enable the merchants.”¹⁴

Walker, in fact, was company’s greatest booster. “The great Atlantic dock,” he wrote in 1849, occupied a “commanding position,” from which it “is rendered perfectly easy and accessible...for the merchants and business of New York.” It was large enough to handle “the largest vessels,” what with its “magnificent opening of 200 feet,” with “so much extra wharf room” and “smooth planks” that commodities could be moved “without risk.” And indeed, within the span of a decade, the Atlantic Dock Company, with the generous aid of the federal government, had reconfigured the commercial geography of New York harbor. There were, to be sure, problems, especially due to hastily constructed wharves and frequent vessel collisions. Yet, for New Yorkers and the merchants that did business there, the Atlantic Dock Company itself emerged a symbol of commercial wealth.¹⁵

But the story of the Atlantic Dock Company did not long evade public scrutiny. During an 1860 investigative hearing by the House of Representatives, William “Boss” Tweed complained audaciously that the warehousing contracts were “never submitted to me.” Instead, “the entire business was done through Mr. [Maximilian] Schell,” the Collector of Customs in 1860 and himself a wealthy merchant. That the Atlantic Docks were a “a fraud upon the government and a fraud upon the men,” testified Tweed democrat James O'Reilly, was known to all except for “them importing merchants.” Of course, this very fact was a source of pride, and not shame, for the New York merchants. As Schell's attorney testified, “Not a single mercantile name of any weight or of any prominence in the city of New York,” objected to the Atlantic Dock Company's arrangements. “All first-class names—large houses,” knew that “it has always been our object to facilitate the merchants as much as we can.”¹⁶

In this way, the Atlantic Dock Company was a living embodiment of the movement and political power of capital, not only in New York, but also in the United States. “Mostly laboring men” complained of the company, testified James Craig in 1860, because they were not the kind of men that had any “connexion

with the public stores *in the way of business.*” Even so, the working class certainly knew symbols of capital when they saw them. Thus, when the city’s white laborers took to the streets in July, 1863, determined to protest the coercive character of the north’s Civil War conscription policy, they purposely attacked icons of the ruling class: government bureaus were predictable targets, as were African-Americans, who were blamed for starting the whole mess (and whose labor, it was feared, would soon supplant the rioters’ own). But corporate and mercantile institutions were targets as well, including the Atlantic Dock Company.¹⁷

Even after the Civil War, the warehousing movement remained significant, although it, like much else in American political economy, was absorbed into the emerging railroad economy. This was a logical progression: the warehouse was an innovative instrument of exchange that had encouraged accumulation; the railcar, quite literally a locomotive warehouse, now mobilized distribution. But the bonded warehouse system, which remained in place well into the twentieth century, was also an important precedent for such innovations as “free trade zones” and other pillars of the modern order.¹⁸ Indeed, the Warehousing Act of 1846 and the economic and geographic changes it wrought demonstrate that the origins of the processes of accumulation, redistribution, and centralization that much define the neo-liberal global order began long before. Most importantly, though, here we see the beginnings of the organized and systematic cooperation of public and private power to shape the scope and scale of American capitalism.

Max Kuo / Beijing Profit Recentering Project

By Hijoo Son

38

In China the greatest industrial revolution in history is the Archimedean lever shifting a population the size of Europe's from rural villages to smog-choked sky-climbing cities. As a result, "China [will] cease to be the predominantly rural country it has been for millenia."¹

Max Kuo's *Beijing Profit Recentering Project* is a proposal that responds to Beijing's urgent urban realities. His project asks how we are to preserve historic sites and manage these unwieldy and unprofitable buildings, while faced with the real estate market fluctuations and structural readjustments of China's epochal rural-to-urban transformation.

Kuo takes China's capital, Beijing, as the point of analysis, and his graphite and ink sketches project architectural shifts in three forms: maps, buildings, and intermediary tools. His *Regional Map* orients the viewer with a 2004 found map, framed by the city's six ring roads highlighted in yellow, whereas the *Land Use Map* (fig. 1) and the *Chrono-Dynamic Map* (fig. 2) are Kuo's own renderings that locate pressure "hotspots." Kuo must negotiate different visual schematics that engage the public and private sectors to see densities and sparseness in an urban landscape full of potential for development, removal, and evacuation without need for demolition and destruction.

Kuo interpolates the syntax for the real and projected cartographic interpretation with a color field, recoding urban space to create new relational processes. The Friendship Store (*Youyi Shangdian*) on *Jianguomenwai Avenue*, or the ubiquitous Starbucks "star" (*xing*) logo no longer need to be the only familiar spatial urban signifiers for foreign eyes. On the flip side, the suburb of *Bei Gao* should not be the housing tract most known to kindle familial spirits within ethnic enclaves of foreign companies' employees outside the city's central activities. Indeed, Kuo's color-coding functions to make legible the real estate market in the simple, yet precise form of color, indicating everything from land-use value and stability to fluctuations and de-

valuations of space.

Kuo proposes a recentering through respatialization. His method, however, does not call for the outward expansion of space along north-south or east-west axes that follow familiar transit corridors that would preserve Beijing's social and cultural identities. Nor does it demand that people move into these expanded suburban spaces. Instead, Kuo's *Spatialization* (figs. 3 and 4) involves the movement of buildings and structures to resolve overpopulation and land-use inefficiencies, projecting growth along under-utilized hotspots within the city. Further, he accounts for the dynamic transformations that inevitably are reflected in the very identities that *cannot* be preserved.

Beijing has grown in population from 4.14 million in 1949 to nearly 14 million in 2001, and Kuo's allusion to buildings taking up "mega" blocks should, perhaps, be changed to "hyper" blocks, prefixes that urban planners now use to describe a city in terms of its population density.² To address the conditions of Beijing's breakneck expansion, Kuo offers us the alternative of intermediary projections such as the *Sky Hub* (fig. 6) or the intermediating hydraulic pulley/tractor system (fig. 5). I envision sky hubs throughout the city in full view above the ring roads as zones of comfort and respite. They are also sites for communication and interactivity—Lefebvrian contact zones—allowing for the multiple locations through which people can traverse. The hydraulic tractor may one day replace the construction cranes and demolition balls that litter the city. This type of infrastructural possibility moves away from wasteful destruction and spatial restrictions.

Kuo's unreal proposal appropriates earlier models such as the 1920s organic method of city planning to the 1960s simulation of fantasy city models. Yet, it inspires something different. The former, epitomized by CIAM's *Athens Charter*, takes the machine as a metaphor for the city wherein the function of the parts (that consisted of daily life, work, play, and circulation) creates an organic



holistic city. The latter 1960s simulation may best be captured by Archigram's *Plug-In City*, where the organic whole became obsolete in the face of an interchangeable urban system that was continually expanding. Therefore, both models, however impossible, were architectural manifestos that explicitly attempted to resolve urban problems of those times.

The difference in Max Kuo's project is that it functions like a mirage, an image of possibility that dissipates upon arrival. In one instance, the dialogic space of sky hubs seems to render the possibility of multivalent subjectivities. But upon a closer reading of Kuo's captions, the parodic play on profit catches the reader off-guard with his own gullibility. To think, what a hoax he plays on we who almost believed that businessmen and laymen interact to build "everlasting mutual understanding"! If the caption describing the intermediary projection of the sky hub is absurdist, then the maps of the concentric six ring roads designed to lead gradually out from the Forbidden City is all-too real. It is as if Kuo is simply reminding us that urbanization necessitates that models, renderings, theory, and planning, all function *within* the space of the city. That is, one can take the organic functions out of the city (with suburban sprawl for example), but one cannot take the city out of its own urban logic. In this sense, the effect of Kuo's recentering is a solipsistic act, but it is foremost an artistic act that embraces fully the dysfunctions of Beijing exactly from where they emanate.

One cannot forget, however, that Kuo's architectural recentering of Beijing is guided by what is most "profitable." In his proposal, then, the profit recentering is not a mere safe-keeping of the old. That is, buildings and historic sites are neither moved nor adjusted to fit within the city's new centers. Rather, profit and preservation are guided by China's new urbanism, a concept grounded in two principle components: one, China is experiencing unprecedented urban growth, as evinced in the number of cities from 198 in 1978 to 640 in 2004;³ two, China's urbanization is occurring simultaneously with expansive industrialization powered by its manufacturing-export regime as well as a vast flow of foreign capital.⁴ In effect, urbanization coupled with industrialization, or urbanization-with-growth, has created conditions for a new urbanism found in few other places in the world.⁵

Is it because of such conditions that Kuo can even dare to propose his faux urban plans for hydraulic maneuvering and sky hub passageways? Are these conditions specific to Beijing's urbanization, or is Max Kuo's profit recentering project a globally prescient one? Can Kuo's project exert influence upon other megalopolises and hypercities to readjust their structures to meet market forces and other desirable affect? Is Kuo's design really hypothetical, or does it provide real, sustainable alternatives for preservation and conservation projects?

01 Profit Recentering Project, Land Use Map. Graphite and gouache on paper, 2004. A snapshot in time, the land-use map designates which areas of the city are in flux. The reds and blues describe areas where buildings will be imported and exported. Although a great deal of the city's infrastructure is commercially stable, portions under pressure will reconfigure to capitalize on the entrepreneurial cooperation of government and private enterprise.





02

02 Profit Recentering Project, Chrono-Dynamic Map. Graphite and gouache on paper, 2004. As an initial attempt at remapping the city's infrastructure, a parametric device is established based on time and contiguous spatial relationships. An 80-year cycle (40 BC to 40 AD) determines the value or obsolescence of every neighborhood/sector in Beijing. With the dynamic generated by contiguity, age, and obsolescence, infrastructural re-distribution will prioritize sectors accordingly. Aging neighborhoods abutting each other may require the immediate removal of infrastructure (conflict), while striation across sectors of both old and new may generate desirable conditions (hotspots) catalyzing the import of new infrastructure.

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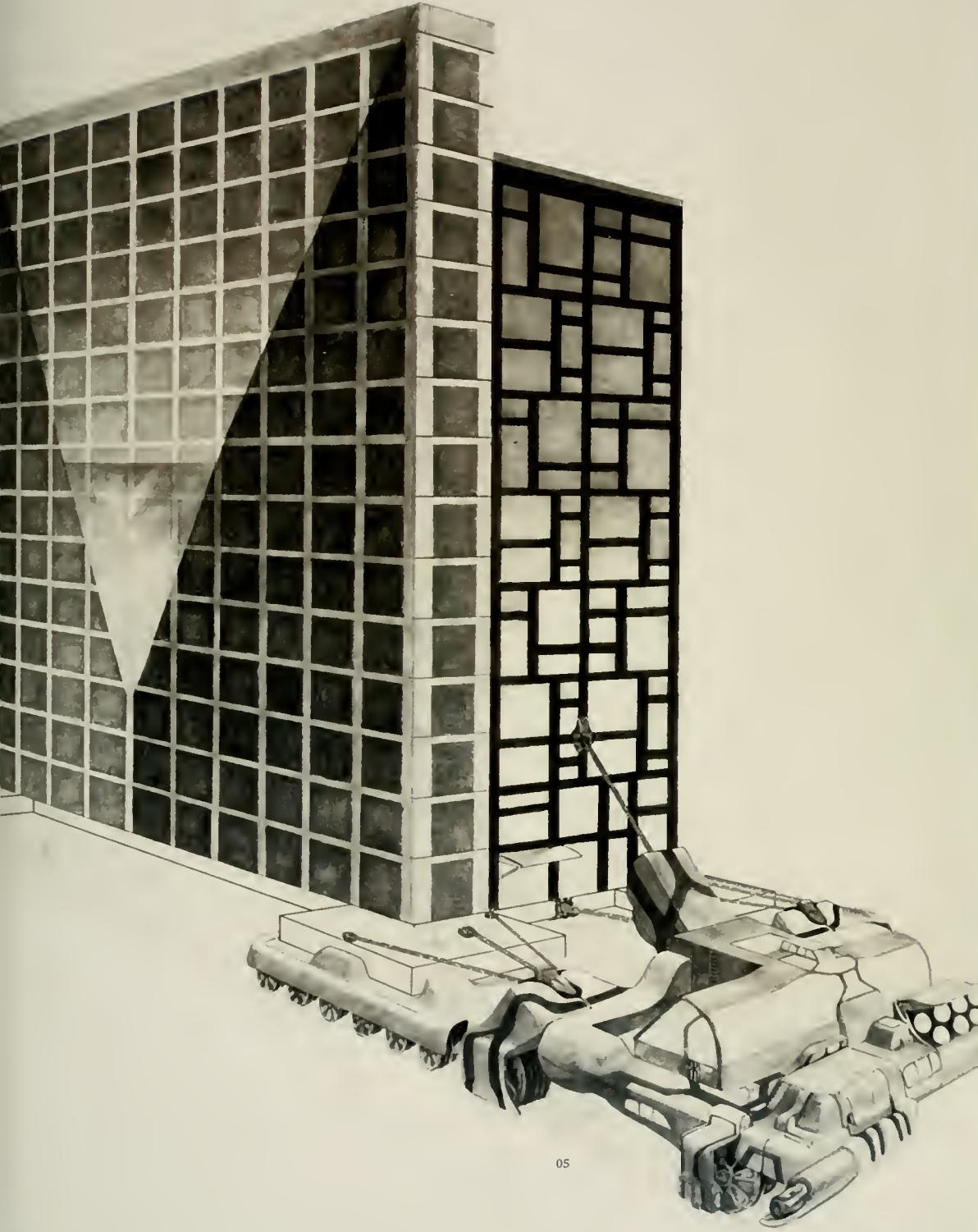


03



04

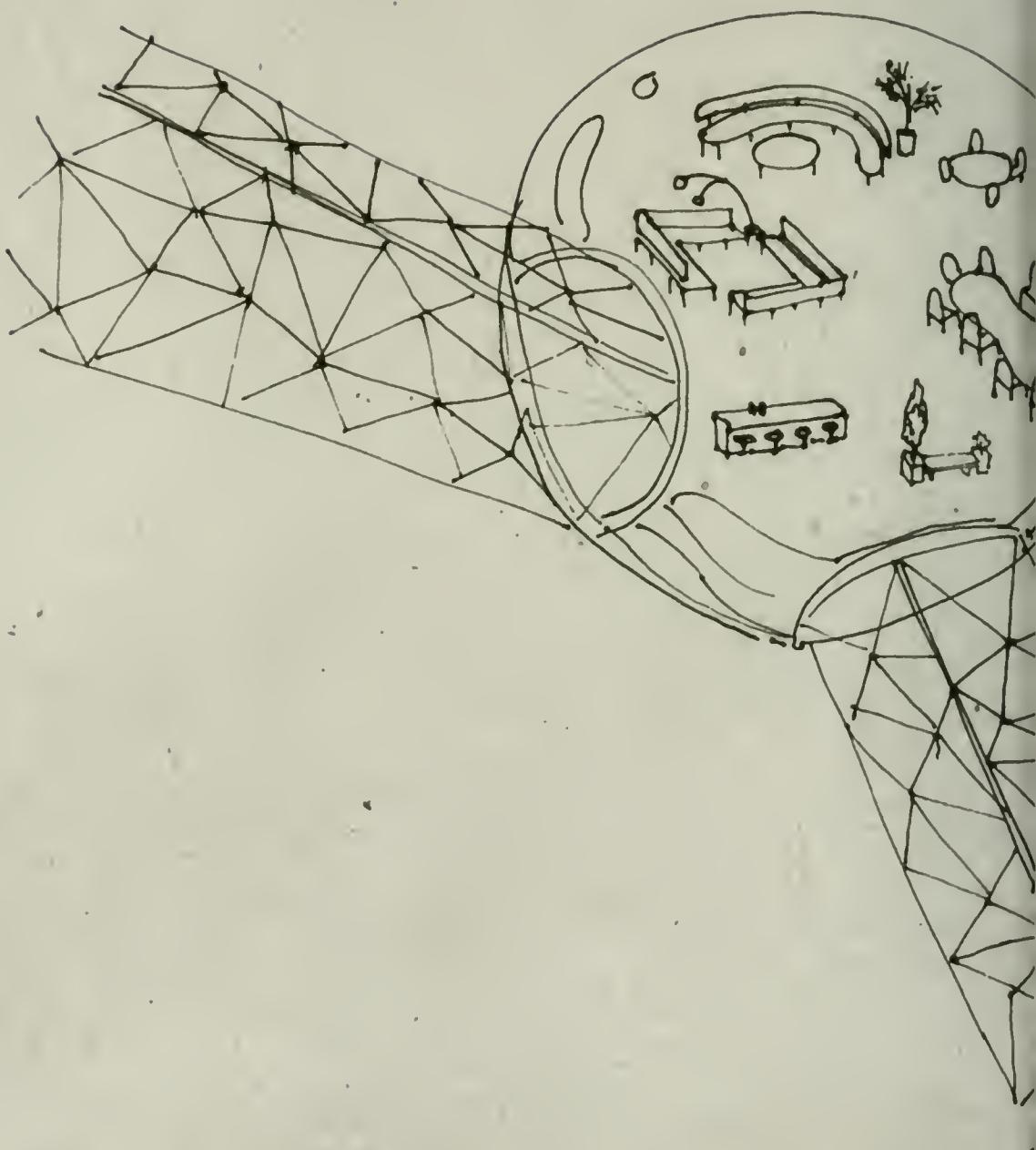
03-04 Profit Recentering Project, Spatialization. Graphite and color pencil on vellum, 2004. In Beijing, architecture and urban planning operate at a larger scale. One building may consume an entire mega-block as if it were a simple holographic extrusion. Through centralization of capital and maximization of space, these buildings stand as futuristic sentinels piercing the skyline. This diagram, based on regional market analysis, projects these zones of anticipated growth as ready-to-live-in spaces furnished by the generosity of global financial industries. Currently, many new shopping and condo developments, scattered throughout major Chinese cities, remain empty. Bought by foreign investors, REITs, and other real estate speculators, these buildings remain vacant tenements, living and effervescent testament to the roaming hunger of capital.

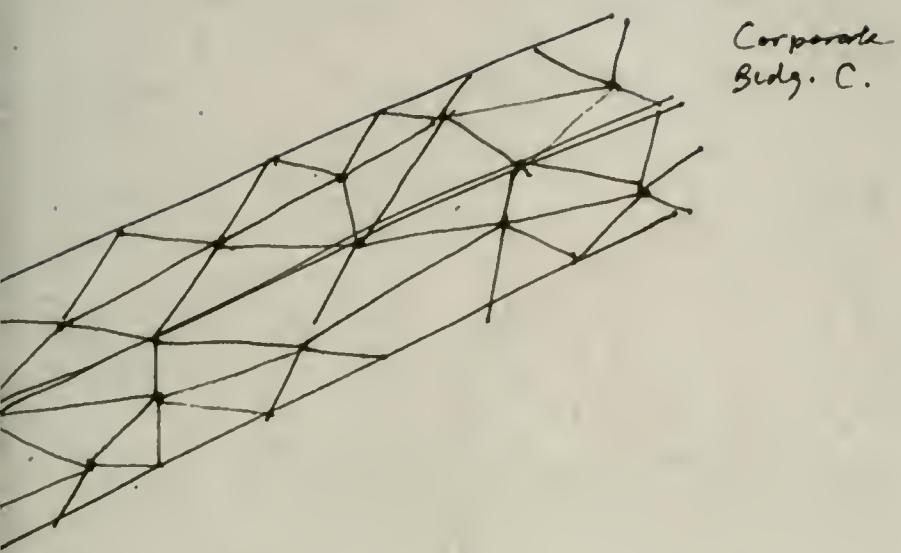


05

05 Profit Recentering Project, Tractor. Graphite on paper, 2004. Here is a closer view of the technology involved in the mobilization and redistribution of real estate. The movement of these buildings will occur along the main arteries of the ring-road infrastructure. To meet the demands of international finance, once again we see the machinations of 19th-century technologies. Began at the turn of the last century, the Panama Canal project carved new geography to enable flows of global markets. Now we witness a return of hydraulic technology to facilitate the speed of urban growth and connectivity of the 21st century. Telecommunication technologies coupled with the brute force of hydraulics and steel will create a new image of the Beijing.

Corporate
Bldg. A





Corporate
Bldg. C.

Sky Hub: To promote inter-personal relationships during the process of joint-ventures & acquisitions & mergers.

Bldg. B

The Geography Simulator: Plamen Dejanoff / Planets of Comparison

By Mihnea Mircan

46

There is no solution because there is no problem. In his latest project, the artist Plamen Dejanoff applies Marcel Duchamp's dictum to two problems that have obsessively preoccupied recent art: the syndrome of institutional distrust and the attempt to rethink the East-West dialogue, both in the wider spaces of globalization and in post-communist Europe. Recuperating the East and defusing the coercions of institutionalism find in Dejanoff's *Planets of Comparison* their anticlimactic and strangely overlapping solutions. The project builds a point of view that allows for reconceptualizing these problems—a viewpoint quite unlike that of Kant's tourist, who continuously adjusts his distance to the pyramids so that they neither become overwhelming, nor do they dissolve into indifferent remoteness.

In 2001, the Palais de Tokyo launched an inquiry among artists, critics, curators and gallerists, starting from the question, "What do you expect from an art institution in the 21st century?" The majority of answers, gathered in a handbook that has seen a number of reprints, meticulously enumerate the strategies of "flexibility," offering a sort of checklist to institutions seeking to ground their legitimacy in something other than their institutional status. The book reads like a compendium of the clichés ruling the art world, of nebulous phrases that create a sense of collective safety and belonging. It also includes a profusion of critical reactions, either cynically defeatist or humorous, according to which institutions are guilty as charged, beyond redemption and always succumbing to their own authoritarian impulses. And there are, of course, exceptions, among which Rirkrit Tiravanija, who argues for something that is "not an institution, but rather a model of non-structures which are in conflict, a model that can be remodeled...an organism which is capable of carrying viruses and eliminating influenzas. Perhaps a continuation of collapsing events, which never ends."¹ Tiravanija's remarkably suggestive reaction introduces the theme, or rather the specter, of the non-institution, haunting a debate that has completely permeated the art world over the last decades. Regardless of the involuntary paradoxes and utopian quotients attending the project of institutional critique in its recent phase, it must be noted that art centers of all kinds have come to reflect in tandem with their circumspect critics on what is on display, how and for whom. This climate of permanent discontent has compelled institutions to rethink their range of influences or audiences, an increase in vigilance that corresponds to their growing significance in administrating contemporary art.

This stringent interrogation has generated two images to which earthly institutions should aspire. The first outlines an ideal museum in permanent transformation, "on







the move" and "in progress," a laboratory for social processes and political renewal, for negotiating identities, challenging preconceptions and crossbreeding art and life. The second, in fact an aggravation of the first, postulates the non- or post-institution as the sumnum of multiplicity. The eviscerated non-institution is a site of diaphanous bureaucracy, of unencumbered display and imponderable process. There the institutional is made unrecognizable, reinvented as a set of tactics matched by counter-tactics that engender not only an exhibition policy but also a system of monitoring it, ensuring that things are in flux and the institution permanently extricates itself from the contexts it proposes.

While the tribulations of the institution which spends half its time hiding itself in denial or self-sabotage, are better suited for a psychoanalysis of the art world, a softer reading of the theme could translate as changing and playing upon contexts, opening up to and working with contradiction. Making sense of Plamen Dejanoff's project *Planets of Comparison* stems from here. If the project succeeds, it might be the best chance we will ever have to see a non-institution at work. The artist has bought seven houses in the historical centre of Veliko Tarnovo, the quaint capital of medieval Bulgaria. He proposes to remodel them with the help of top architects and convert them into spaces for exhibiting contemporary art, to be used by prestigious international museums under specific agreements. The participating museums would thus obtain a branch or outpost, for either their collections or their project spaces, situated in the heart of the unknown, in the very epicenter of the Balkans. The project breaches the symbolic architecture of institutions and inaugurates a new episode in the history of artists' conflicted relations to the museum. *Planets of Comparison* would establish a site for institutional dialogue of a new sort and unprecedented amplitude, a target practice area where institutions will necessarily recalibrate their positions, negotiate with audiences and each other, far from the safety of

known territory and unproblematic positions, in relation to a new public and potentially startling sets of problems. This site could itself be regarded as another kind of institution, a platform for exchange between museums that bypasses and overreaches the bland rhetoric of collaboration or the intricacies of temporary export and insurance: *Planets of Comparison* could generate emulation of the best kind between artistic institutions, a proximity of divergent claims and modes of action that, in interplay, could function like a machine for producing complexity.

Dejanoff's project seems to draw the logical conclusions of separate lines of reasoning, intertwining institutional policy, cross-cultural dialogue and competing self-definitions of West and East in Europe after the fall of communism. We in fact come to wonder whether we have been asking the right questions, as this is the anti-climax in both the debate about institutions and the heated self-interrogation which is one—if not the central—part of the convolutions of Eastern European identity. In a discerning essay about the project, Antonia Majaca notes its ingenuity in engaging and rearranging ideas of centre and periphery, manipulating the hangover of cultural paternalism and, I would add, the constellation of dim anxieties and unspoken desires activated by the notion of colonization in Eastern Europe. In short, a transformed "technology of the museum" meets a new "technology of the East."

With *Planets of Comparison*, Plamen Dejanoff does not choose to introduce us directly to his take on institutional critique, unmasking perverse alliances between art centers and dubious power systems, dysfunctions and blind spots that are divulged everyday and still, obstinately there. Moreover, he does not initiate a very plausible and feasible Veliko Tarnovo biennial, engaging a generous view of cross-cultural dialogue that takes into account the remarkable heritage of the charming Bulgarian city and confronts it to advanced forms of contemporary art. He



does not join the trend of peripheral biennials, whose increase in number is only matched by their progressive failure to attain international resonance, a review or some other evanescent triumph. His endeavor is significantly different from the brief, unproblematic encounter between East and West, where they puzzle over each other's habits and appraise each other's insecurities, with a panel discussion pledging allegiance to a model of the local set against the diversity of the international and systematically, obsessively reinforcing this polarity. Plamen Dejanoff works on a different scale and designs a project that does not seek validation elsewhere than in its own exercise and performance, a complex, accumulative process where parasites are incompletely assimilated while modifying the organism on which they feed. If we were to compare this project to "yet another biennial" as a means of promoting a place and signifying an emergence of the peripheral, I would say that we have the difference between parachuting a load of humanitarian aid in comparison to a Marshall Plan for the arts.

The artist's return to his native Bulgaria takes the shape of a platform, not unlike the platforms he has used to arrange his sculptural installations. One such instance is *Made in Bulgaria*, a part of *Collective Wishdream of Upper Class Possibilities*, composed of signs and fetishes of comfort and speed, mostly transparent and unable to retain the gaze, somehow dissolving in their own exchange value. With *Planets of Comparison*, the amplitude and complexity of the platform change dramatically, as it now involves architects, arguments of city planning, questions of infrastructure, architectural heritage and conversion, as well as museums as pieces in the puzzle. The artist has always taken on the role of a facilitator of exchange, an exchange that more or less inspired critics have regarded as contamination, as his polemic energy complicates or more frequently resituates the gap between art and life, yet always leaving it intact. Plamen Dejanoff finds his field of action in providing ground for unexpected combinations, infiltrating economy and advertisement and returning with audacious artistic solutions. There is a precedent to the treatment of the institution performed by *Planets of Comparison*: his 2002 show with Palais de Tokyo, actually held in the artist's Berlin studio, which temporarily replicated the institutional practice of the French museum. Palais de Tokyo financed a project that could only be seen in a foreign city, while the artist's studio, normally a place of production, became provisionally accessible to public visits. Opening hours, the design of invitation cards, French-speaking mediators, everything contributed to the rebranding of the studio as an annex of Palais de Tokyo.

Ideally, *Planets of Comparison* will create an international MuseumsQuartier "in

the middle of nowhere" (as the artist states), a place animated by tensions between contexts, modes of tourism and modes of (reciprocal) exoticism, and therefore an experimental site for quite a few disciplines. The fact that the Viennese MUMOK museum has taken the commendable first step of acquiring a converted villa and developing a medium-term exhibition program for this space will undoubtedly attract the attention of peers, helping the project to advance. Other museums will join in the expansion, a reaction that is predictable inasmuch as it is conditioned by their own rhetoric concerning institutional flexibility and cross-cultural dialogue. Refusal to embark upon the project, which is discretely and elegantly twisting their respective arms and institutional limbs would falsify their ideology of openness.

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This particular handling of the museum as artistic medium amounts to a Greenbergian attitude to the workings of the institution: it makes use of the "characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence."² Plamen Dejanoff uproots museums and transplants them into a different, irreducibly plural context, obliged to test their presuppositions on "hostile ground." Each of the institutions that the artist will persuade to join the project will bring a different baggage of visions, artistic positions, interpretations and chunks of history, to be incorporated in a matrix of particularities and globalities and perhaps in the writing of a common history. Architects will vie for attention and so will exhibition programs, curatorial practices will have to adapt in terms of a sustained site-specific focus, unanticipated collaborations will emerge and local artists will inevitably gatecrash. Museums will play the part scripted for them by the artist, that of instruments in re-writing the geography of the contemporary world, as promoters of change, as symptoms of prosperity and means of inducing it, finally as tools of liberal economy. They will participate in the artist's global, hyper-networking, enacting "comparison" and mediation between cultural domains and practices, in countries and zones of Europe that sometimes do feel like different planets. In their collision, these will generate a big bang of situatedness and globalization, a glocality with a twist—one worth elaborating. Because the project is designed in the West to be implemented in the East, we already know it as a combination of geography, metaphor, and misapprehension.

A preliminary answer to the question "What is Eastern Europe?" would be that the East is neither East nor West, but a vast space of contradiction, ceaseless self-reflection and sociological conundrums, where scenarios of past and future are rehearsed and abandoned. It can be described as a museum of political history for Europe at large, as well as a laboratory where various models of European future are being tried out, although it is probably neither. After 1989, the "East" has embarked on a series of contradictory operations, aiming to recoup a few decades of political, social and cultural brutality. It tried to reevaluate its inscription in a European cultural history that, by its amlessness and by the depth of its guiding principles, relegated postwar history to the status of a minor incident. This effort perfectly matched the ideas underlying European expansion, which in turn coincided with the massive popularity of East-West union in "Eastern" countries, a project perceived as salvation, even if in primarily economic terms. Alternately, the "East" claimed recognition for its traumatic recent history, asked to be understood on its



own terms, asserted that it had done without "Europe" for fifty years and could carry on doing so. Various strategies of reinvention emerged from here, generally involving celebration of local flavors of brandy, misleading spices and equally dubious ideas of conviviality and hospitality, accompanied by more or less fierce nationalist politics.

After the glorious promises of the early 1990s and the mutual disappointment that ensued, East-West relations in Europe tended to reenact a traumatic scenario. The dialogue was ambiguous at best, with both sides contributing to its failure and in general complicated on the Eastern side by the question of identity, undying source of melancholic wisdom for its thinkers. Mapping the distance between East and West has always been a crucial matter for the East, as was rewriting history, plagued by ideologies and disfigured by misalliances. Maps and histories have remained tentative and conflicted, so this cultural gesticulation can be summed up as "map envy," or "history envy" respectively. The East deals with its own marginality in a way that unmistakably recalls Zeno's Achilles, attempting to constitute its identity in relation to what it lacks fundamentally. Here is the poignant formulation of the point by Aleksander Kiossev, who in a regionally notorious essay proposed the notion of "self-colonising cultures":

In the genealogical knot of the Bulgarian national culture there exists the morbid consciousness of an absence—a total, structural, non-empirical absence (where are "our" magazines, literature, rhetoric, mathematics, logic, physics, philosophy, etc., etc., which man needs more than bread? Where is our history and civilization as a whale?). The Others—i.e. the neighbours, Europe, the civilized World—possess all that we lack; they are all that we are not. The identity of this culture is initially marked, and even constituted by, the pain, the shame—and to formulate it more generally—by the trauma of this global absence. The origin of this culture arises as a painful presence of absences and its history could be narrated, in short, as centuries-old efforts to make up for and eliminate the traumatic shortages.³

The dialectics of cultural import-export has kept the polarity at the very heart of the process of self-definition. The statistical Eastern European is a binary structure, arising through complicity between what is desired and what is abhorred, alternating tortuously between inferiority complexes and bursts of superiority, oscillating with phenomenal rapidity between feelings of exceptionality and callous self-deprecation.

Artistically, we seem today to be past the "after-the-wall" situation of the '90s—when Eastern art works finally made their way to Western museums and galleries, where the "not-just-art" take, compulsively framing art works as testimonies of conflict and struggle, was dangerously close to "not-really-art," rendering pieces almost unrecognizable behind political and historical attachments. Are we past the rhetoric of Harald Szeemann's "Blood and Honey," bazaar-like displays saturated by phantasms of the Balkans and the smoke of *cevapcici* (like a gloomy fog or like an aura, take it as you will), delineating a remote and irreducibly alien territory of conflict and melancholy, history and utopia? Yet the derivates or relics of the after-the-wall attitude are still around, to be found in a profusion of artistic projects designed to "promote collaboration," to bridge the gap, in exhibitions and panels to explore the divide, in symposia to analyze or invent common problems, or at least try and speak the same language. Seemingly unaware of the irony attending the enterprise, all these initiatives have strengthened the separation, maintained as focal point the difficulty—the awkwardness even—of talking to each other.

Understood in after-the-wall terms, *Planets of Comparison* suggests the impossibility of construing the East: always not there, absorbed in a daily exercise of passionate self-deconstruction and willing victim to any sort of colonization that would help it gain distance from itself. Like Groucho Marx, the statistical Easterner would not be a member of any club that would have him as a member. As the East keeps diffracting, Plamen Dejanoff proposes a different focus, an approach that repudiates the discourse of gaps and divisions. What the map cuts up, the project cuts across, with an effortlessness that indicates this counter-geography to be the by-product of an entirely different concern. Plamen seems to state that the disagreement or maladjustment between East and West is an exercise in futility. His is a decidedly *after-the-wall* logic, that reconceptualizes the problem and deflates the Gordian knot. *Planets of Comparison* creates a meeting place where East-West dialogue is not automatically the main question, it brings the West to the East in an act which is neither import, nor export, neither colonization, nor self-colonization (or at least by which it ceases to be clear who is colonizing who and why), but an artistic act; an artistic idea that incorporates identity and its painful avatars, that collapses geographies and acts of trespassing. While revealing vulnerable definitions or obdurate misunderstandings, it ironically conveys the idea of an ontological impossibility of the East, then changes the subject and proposes to think about some-

thing else—art for instance, or the artist. The project dislocates or disorients the East and subjects it to the economic possibilities of globalization, incidentally also putting the East on the map, even if a markedly different map from the one it aspired to. East is permeated by West, as well as by non-East and non-West, resulting into a third place, a three-dimensional chart created by intermingling directions and axes of exchange.

Globalization certainly is one of the main themes of today's art, with artists reflecting on the expanding circulation of communications and commerce, on the homogenizing drive that engulfs all, on the particular threatened and reemerging, on the destiny of traditions and highways, on expanding brands and social systems. Artists work with time-space compression, history speeding up and space shrinking, with everything simultaneously condensing and multiplying. They survey new kinds of tourism and new migrations, draw maps and diagrams that reflect modes of habitation, different ideas of urbanism, social or economic networks developing along arteries of the global world. They reflect on the subtleties of geopolitics, on the complicated structures that circumscribe, divide or bring together. Modes of circulation and confinement articulate the global landscape of art, but, as critics have noted, also suggest that the art world has responded to contemporary geopolitics largely through representations of the global, seeing itself as distinct from the real world, like a figure against a ground. But a handful of artists are in fact doing more, they build geographical machines, simulators for re-programming borders and the rules of border-crossing, or for inserting them in other scenarios. They create new stages for action and present life-size versions of globalization instead of its images.

With *Planets of Comparison*, Plamen Dejanoff picks things up where they had been abandoned by symposia and seminars on enlarging Europe as a framework for the arts. If globalization is economic and the ideology underlying it matches the neo-liberal agenda, Plamen Dejanoff takes advantage of his position as an artist to amend the Eastern perceptual map by *enacting* a kind of globalization of unsure economic outcome, infiltrating and corrupting its purely economic logic. Museums imitate the behavior of companies, venturing for profit in unknown territory, although this is an expansion whose script is written by the artist. In this "topocritical" experiment, the complicated map of the Balkans is superimposed upon the map of the art world, with its rhetoric and power system, shortcomings and ambitions, an operation that uncovers a new world in the mesh of exchange, known trajectories and beaten tracks.

What we have in the end is a kind of globalization or neo-liberalism purified, detached from necessity and financial dependencies. The undercurrents pervading our world, be they ways to shape economy, geography, or the politics of art, are entwined and deployed in a single move, to mutual contestation and clarification. The mechanics of *Planets of Comparison*, energetically incorporates the misguided struggles of Eastern Europe and "performs" neo-liberalism, in a sort of inversion that dislocates both figure and ground. Rirkrit Tiravanija's conflictual non-structures and endless sequence of collapses springs to mind again: *Planets of Comparison* constructs a viewpoint for which the forces of enormous impact that traverse social space and their are made visible—palpable even. Dejanoff's "viewer" is situated at the center of a roaring storm of political data.

Joel Ross / Room 28

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One September afternoon in 1997, at a motel about 100 miles west of Austin, Texas, Joel Ross quietly carried 50 vintage suitcases into his room, two by two so as to avoid suspicion. Throughout the night he dismantled the contents of the room—its wall fixtures, furniture, mirror, and bedding—with a set of hand tools. In the end, there was little left, aside from the bathroom sink. The disemboweled contents were carefully cut up and packed away in the cases. Ross left the motel during the night, suitcases in hand in the same two by two manner by which he entered, and sped off into the darkness, leaving what we can only imagine was a very distressed motel owner later that morning.

The result of that night's felony is *Room 28*, now a permanent installation in the James hotel in Chicago. The suitcases are arranged in a stacked cube, the top nine left open to reveal their stolen bits of wood veneer, mattress stuffing and light fixtures. The art-friendly boutique hotel clearly enjoys Ross's commentary on the traditional appointments of travel—the room now sits inside the suitcases instead of the other way around—and provides an apt resting place for the work.

A room destroyed by its containment, *Room 28* is an impossible object in the Dada-ist tradition. It is unable to re-create its past, to ever function again either as a room or as a set of valises. At the same time, the overarching metaphor of road travel is the perfect staging to explore even broader impossibilities at play: the tensions between site and architecture, history and memory, nostalgia and romance. While the travel and tourism industry may try to convince us otherwise, Ross suggests that the past, be it a time or place, can never be recaptured, no matter the size of your memento.

In its present form at the James hotel, *Room 28* gives the appearance of a post- (or mock-) minimalist sculpture. Its modules of red, green, blue and beige, highlighted with metal trim and brackets, gesture at the systematic order and industrial

By Dina Deitsch

materials favored by artists such as Donald Judd and Dan Flavin. But Ross's textured installation—with its collection of broken building material and faux leather, and the lumpy, irregular pile made by the curvature of the suitcases—undercuts the slick, machine-produced aesthetic of those artists. Rather, the materiality of these readymade containers suggests a time and place when people hauled luggage in oversized car trunks. *Room 28* evokes a very specific form of travel—vehicular, American, and, more importantly, nostalgic.

A Chicago-based conceptual artist, Ross is often reluctant to reveal that his working process is in fact narrative- and character-driven. In this case, the embedded protagonist behind *Room 28* is an anti-hero who tries, in vain, to win back his lost love by giving her the motel room they once shared. The memory of his unrequited love is echoed in the broken motel room, the 1950s-era suitcases, and in references to the rustic romance of highway travel.

Born of Eisenhower's Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, the American interstate system propelled cross country road-tripping in the mid-20th century to a new level of popularity, attended by the concurrent/related growth of roadside lodging. In the advertising of the day, the highway held connotations of freedom and a unified national landscape, epitomizing the optimism and prosperity of 1950s America. The quintessential road-trip-as-a-quest-for-self, of course, was immortalized through Beatnik sacred texts like Kerouac's *On the Road*, published in 1957. Although that same roadscape stands today as a remnant of that gloried past, it is, as Ross reminds us, at best a construct, a rose-tinted memory that excludes the social and political struggles of post-war culture. Thus, the open road becomes the site of a misguided nostalgia—of a desire to return to an irretrievable, constructed past, not unlike the failed romantic gesture of Ross's fictional protagonist.



Highways and motel chains both provide a traveler with a sense of continuity, familiarity; whether pulling off an exit in Texas or Connecticut, she will sleep in the same bedroom. The fact that Ross literally packed up one of these rooms gestures at its portable nature: it follows us where ever we go. And yet this safe, predictable mode of travel is at odds with the image of the individual road warrior cultivated by the likes of Kerouac. The cross country drive as a passage of self-discovery and coming of age is a nostalgic fiction riddled with an arguably false sense of autonomy. This same self-delusion shoots through all modern travel; even as we claim to seek adventure and new experiences, we cocoon ourselves in the familiar comforts of the tourism industry.

This tension between self-containment and freedom of mobility was similarly the subject of Diller + Scofidio's *Tourisms: Suitcase Studies* from 1991. Like Ross's work, the architects' installation includes 50 suitcases, in this case hung open from the ceiling at eye level. Each holds a postcard of a historical site from a different American state, a souvenir item from that spot, and a mirror. The mirror reflects the text on the back of the cards, phrases that are generic stand-ins for typical postcard messages: "The travel itinerary. The remark to elicit envy. Meal comments." Their installation laments in the homogeneity of modern travel and the smoothing over of history via the commercialization of historical sites. Battlefields and historic homes are transformed into entertainment centers and tourist attractions, financially sustained by souvenir sales. The repetition of these nearly identical miniature monuments to monuments commodify these places into portable tokens that flatten the national past (history) with a personal past (memories of a vacation). All the while, once-grizzly sites of conflict become family-friendly attractions, defanged and drained of their specificity and turned into small-scale spectacles.

If the typical souvenir is a portable, mass-produced object in the shape of a historical site, say, a statuette of the Washington Memorial, then *Room 28* is simply a souvenir on a monumental scale. It too is a portable object made of mass-produced objects (suitcases and building materials) arranged in a cube much like the cuboid space of a room. But Ross's souvenir is unique. Whereas *Tourisms* uses the idea of the keepsake to highlight the enervation of national and individual experience, Ross uses it to reclaim a semblance of individuality. The nondescript, undistinguished motel room is both the "historical" site—the setting for the anti-hero's romantic memory—and the portable reminder of that event. Ross begins with the banal, and through an almost Proustian narrative, imbues it with memory. If Diller + Scofidio show us how the roadside attraction trivializes historical events, Ross monumentalizes it, by re-forming it back into a moment in the past. However, in the process of containment, the motel room, the original site of memory, is destroyed. In its hulking monumentality, *Room 28* is a souvenir of its own impossibility.

In making the room impossibly "portable," Ross ultimately alludes to the current condition of the spaces we take with us, either in memory or in the decreasing diversity of our globalized landscape. As we move further and further towards what Diller + Scofidio presciently warned against—virtual tourism and the smoothed spaces of the Internet—as sites become less physical, Ross's tug at nostalgia bursts through the sheer materiality of the installation. Permeating *Room 28* is the futility of recapturing and containing the past. What we are left with, finally, is simply the physical humor of lugging a memory.

Xiao Xiong / Enter and Exit

By Winnie Won Yin Wong

In the summer of 2002, the young artist Xiao Xiong joined the “Long March Project,” an ambitious Chinese contemporary art collective led by curators Lu Jie and Qiu Zhijie. With artistic and curatorial projects planned for twenty-six stops on a lengthy itinerary, the group aimed to retread the path of the historic Long March, the epic military maneuver of 1934–36 that is the heroic founding narrative of Chairman Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party.

While the artistic and curatorial team led by Lu and Qiu began their journey in Ruijin (the beginning point of the historic Long March), with the intention of arriving in Yan'an (popularly considered the birthplace of the Chinese communist revolution), Xiao Xiong embarked alone and traveled in reverse, from Yan'an to Ruijin. The group led by Lu and Qiu never completed the route of the historical Long March, altering course instead to Beijing to found the Long March exhibition space, but Xiao completed the impressive trek, using rural bus service, in two months.

Along the way, Xiao conducted a *xingwei* art project entitled, “Enter and Exit” (*Jin yu chu*). *Xingwei yishu*, commonly translated as “performance art” in English, refers in Chinese more accurately to “behavior” in the quotidian sense of “conduct,” as well as to “action” in all its socio-political potential. Xiao’s artistic *xingwei*, consisting a series of bartering events, trades, and exchanges with strangers, is thus a “behavior” he enacts throughout his journey, to be distinguished from certain orchestrated events in which the artist and others almost falsely, as he states, “perform” the same actions before an attending audience.

Xiao began his reverse-Long March with a ceramic souvenir figurine of Chairman Mao purchased at the Mao Zedong Memorial Hall in Beijing, and, in Yan'an, he traded it for a pack of cigarettes from a plumber. This pack of cigarettes was traded to two ticket-takers at the Revolutionary Martyr’s Cemetery in the town of Bao’an, who agreed not to punch his ticket after he bought it, thereby giving him a “free” admission ticket. This ticket was then exchanged for a visitor’s pamphlet describing the history of Mao’s Former Residences in Bao’an, which was then traded for an embroidered tablecloth in the town of Wuqi, and so on. Each of Xiao’s trades is recorded with a photograph and a signature on a vintage leather trunk that he used to transport the objects. By the end of his journey, Xiao had completed some thirty trades, in essence transferring objects given to him from over forty sites.

In a daily journal that records this journey, Xiao Xiong ponders the meaning of

each object and gift he acquires, their connection to the historic locales and the myths of Mao Zedong and the Red Army, as well as the nature of exchange, commerce and transfer itself between an artist and people of a range of backgrounds, interests, and ethnicities. Although Xiao in the journal makes clear his impulse to connect his *xingwei* with the history of the Long March, his expectations are often thwarted, overcome, or undercut. As a contemporary and personal history of the Long March, Xiao's journal is thus a story of a multitude of displaced attitudes towards the history and memory of the epic event. As a story, however, of the connections and misunderstandings between an artist and his public, Xiao Xiong's *Enter and Exit* offers a telling account of the status of *xingwei* art in the diverse and rural locales throughout China. There is skepticism from the self-proclaimed "common folk," yes, and disapproval from authorities, of course, but above all Xiao Xiong and his trading counterparts express an overwhelming desire to create transformative meaning through their exchanges. Their trades are ritualized with the signing of names, with inscriptions, with commemorative photographs, gifts, drinks, and blessings. Many participants choose to trade items that are deeply personal, self-made or representative of their homes and ethnic identities. Yet uneasiness with material exchange is also evident in those who are wary of being somehow tricked for Xiao's profit. Concern about money and dollar values resurface constantly, as in a man who "trades" an exquisite chain of Qing dynasty copper coins for the tiny sum of 10 RMB, or numerous townsfolk who refuse to trade for an album of a well-known contemporary artist's paintings in fear that they would never be able to sell it. Often, exchange values creep into Xiao's trades even when they are completely unintended, as in the old gentleman who trades away a family heirloom and turns around to find his son trading for it back with a gold-plated object, in order to get his inheritance a little earlier.

As is clear in his use of the Chinese terms *jiaohuan* to mean the swapping or bartering of objects, and *jiaoyi* to refer to a commercial transaction, Xiao Xiong initially imagines a pure form of exchange devoid of commodification, and a form of participatory art that requires non-capitalist reciprocity from the "people." But, through the course of his journey, the alchemy of exchange leads him on a detour of the already-layered history of the Chinese Communist Party and its place in late-socialist China. In rooting this chain of trades, gifts, purchases, and transactions on the itinerary of a heroic political narrative, Xiao's attempt to "close the loop" of history, reveals instead its open endings, endings made open by the portability of his bartered objects.



Timeline of Trades

July 10, Beijing

Souvenir ceramic bust of Mao Zedong

July 12, Yan'an

Mao Zedong souvenir for a pack of *Yan'an* Cigarettes

July 13, Zhidan

Yan'an Cigarettes for an un-punched admission ticket to the Liu Zhidan Revolutionary Martyr's Park
Admission ticket for a visitor's pamphlet *Red Comes to Bao'an* and a visitor's guide to Chairman Mao's Former Residences

July 13, Wuqi

Red Comes to Bao'an pamphlet for an embroidered tablecloth with blue tassles in the Wuqi style

July 15, Huachi

White tablecloth for a champion's trophy won in a youth chess competition

Photograph inscribed with *The Spirit of the Old Liberated Areas Lives Forever* (trophy refused)

July 16-17, Guyuan

Photograph and trophy for a calligraphic couplet written on paper by a group of students, and momentos from their military training service, including a cap insignia, an armband, and a pair of collar pins.

July 17, Liupan

Calligraphy couplet for an ethnic Hui cap

Hui cap for another white Hui cap, inscribed by an Imam

July 17, Longde

Whitecap and student's military momentos for an artist's calligraphic couplet of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai sayings

July 18, Huining

Calligraphic couplet for a clinic doctor's written prescriptions

July 19, Tongwei

Doctor's prescriptions for an anthology of poems entitled *Expressions from Gansu* and an anthology of writings from the local Cultural Federation

July 19, Dingxi

ID card for the ID card back (status as "trade" unclear)

July 20, Longxi

Anthologies for a Chinese translation of the Central Asian travelogues of an English watercolorist

July 20, Hadapu

Travelogue for a red purse handmade in the Hadapu style (trade eased by the purchase of some postcards)

July 22, Rou'ergai

Red Hadapu purse for a Tibetan Buddhist painted icon

July 23, Ma'erkang

Tibetan Buddhist painted icon for a length of Qing dynasty copper coins

July 24, Danba

Chain of copper coins for 10 RMB

July 25, Kangding

No trade

August 5, Qujing
Album of artworks for one 50 RMB bill

August 5, Panxian
50 RMB for a counterfeit Japanese Citizen man's watch, a pocket radio of generic make, a counterfeit "imported" wind-proof lighter

August 6, Xingyi
Pocket radio for a pack of *Long March* cigarettes exclusive to Guizhou province

August 7, Guiyang
Counterfeit Citizen man's watch for a Republican-era coin with authenticity certificate
Republican-era coin for an elegant antiquarian screen with gold foil

August 8, Qianxi
Pack of *Long March* cigarettes, lighter and gold-foil screen for a playwright's original theatrical script and a tape recorder with a recording of a drama troupe's rehearsal

August 9, Jinsha
Script and tape recorder for a recent art school graduate's student alarm clock

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August 10, Guiyang
No trade accomplished

August 11, Zunyi
Student alarm clock for an art dealer's leather cigar box with one *Havanna* cigar inside

August 12, Weng'an
Leather cigar box and cigar for a photographer's five photographs of major Long March landmarks in the area

August 13, Jianhe
Five photographs for a peasant's painting depicting ethnic harvest customs

August 14, Liping
Peasant's painting for a pair of handmade straw sandals in the local style

August 15, Tongdao
Straw sandals for a satchel embroidered with *Affections of the Dong people*

August 16, Daoxian
Embroidered satchel for a book by local author entitled *Lady He Baozhen the Martyr*

August 17, On the road
No trade accomplished

August 18, Jinggangshan
Lady He Baozhen the Martyr book for one issue of the journal *Liaoyuan* and a tourist's guidebook of Jinggang Mountain
Guidebook and journal for a set of Mao Zedong cards

August 19, Ruijin & August 21, Xiamen
Mao Zedong cards for a *Kodak* disposable camera (trade arranged by telephone in Ruijing and delivered in Xiamen)

Ruijin



Journal Entries

July 17, Longde

—Afternoon, at Zhang Guoqin's living quarters at the Longde Cultural Center. This was an office of only about fifteen square meters. Currently it served as Zhang's office and bedroom. A large bed and a large drawing desk took up most of the space, and the wall was hung full of calligraphy. Next to the pillow was a copy of Yu Qiuyu's *The Bitter Journey of Culture*. In the corner of the room were a few household items and an everyday electric stove. Though it was crowded, it was not messy!

Zhang told me he was preparing to spend five years to complete a major work: a 249 meter-long Chinese landscape scroll painting entitled *25,000 Miles*. He planned to exhibit it at Beijing's Tian'anmen Square on the 70th anniversary of the Red Army's Long March! At the moment he had just begun the early stages of the work.

I asked him why it was not going to be 250 meters.

"250 doesn't sound good! It's a taboo! The 25,000 miles attributed to the Long March is itself just a rough estimate," he answered, "so I decided on this length after a discussion with my friends." Then, with great pride, he showed me all the souvenirs and photographs he had collected from his own retreading of the Long March on his motorbike last year. He said, "I feel that the most valuable thing I got from this journey was this rope. When I was cutting across the great plains of southern Gansu, I encountered a storm. The rope I had used to tie down my luggage broke and my bike got stuck! In the nick of time, several Tibetan folks passed by and rescued me. In their tents I survived the storm. If they hadn't saved me, I might have froze to death that day. Afterwards because I was sick with a high fever, I stayed in their home for several days. The generosity of the Tibetan people is not something you would understand unless you have experienced it for yourself. When I left, they gave me this piece of rope! It is hand woven from yak hair, as beautiful as it is strong. It is my most profound memory from my Long March...I'm going to cut off a portion of it now to put in your trading trunk, but you must promise me to keep it forever, and never, ever trade it away. In addition I will write a couplet to trade with you."

I found his calligraphic couplet very interesting: The first line was Mao Zedong's: "He who does not reach the Great Wall is not a true hero." The second line was Zhou Enlai's: "The man who fails but drowns is still a hero." Zhang wrote two copies, one to serve as a trading item, the other as a gift to me. On the trunk itself, he wrote about the origins of the yak-hair rope and that he entrusts me to never trade it away. Then he took that white Hui cap, the arm badge and the cap insignia from the Ningxia University students and very carefully placed them on his bookcase.

He said to me, "I seem to suddenly understand the meaning behind your *xingwei*. You see, now that these things are here, from now on whenever I look at them, I will think of you, yet none of these things are yours...Indeed! You modern art people are always full of gimmicks," he continued, "but at its root, it is still art. I get it now after a bit of contemplation! You are truly worthy to be a Long March veteran! You've said it all with one word!" I felt a bit embarrassed by my own paltry compliments to him!

July 24, Danba

I decided to make my trade partner in Danba the young man I had been riding with on the bus all the way here. I made the decision as soon as we arrived. This young man told me that his last name was Zhou, that he was from Zhejiang, and that he was here to promote medical equipment. Cunning, inscrutable, and crafty: this was the impression he left me after more than ten hours on the road together. I did not trust anything he said. On the other hand, this young man was equally suspicious about my own identity and my *xingwei*. This is one reason why I chose him to trade with me.

So it was here, in a place where a river, the Red Army, Tibetans, Hans, merchants and iterant peddlers have all passed through, that two mutually suspecting people conducted an enigmatic form



of exchange. Precisely speaking, this exchange was actually more like a commercial transaction! At night, in a noodlehouse run by a Sichuan man, we ate Dan Dan Noodles as we negotiated.

The owner of the noodlehouse was a meddlesome Sichuan man, and he nudged the young man with an idea: "These are copper coins, why don't you buy it with real money?" Zhou murmured to himself for a long time, but he finally brought out 8 RMB to "exchange" with me. The owner exclaimed, "Young man, be more generous! Make it 10 RMB and when you come to eat tomorrow I won't charge you for your noodles!" Between the grip I had on the young man, the meddlesome proprietor's horseplay, the pressure from the onlookers, and the young man's need to save face, the air was thick with trading atmosphere! In a theatre of real time and space, we performed an "unreal" exchange drama.

Here we don't need a Red Army story! There is no revolutionary logic!

Aug 4, Xundian

The part of this town that made the deepest impression on me was an old street with several workshops that made traditional weighing scales. These scales had long been made obsolete by new regulations, but in this town it seems that they were still in use everywhere.

At one workshop, I presented the album of paintings by Pan Dehai and asked the middle-aged proprietor, "This artist is famous all over the country, and this album has his signature, how about I trade it to you for a scale?"

The proprietor stopped his work and after flipping through the album, asked, "What person is he painting here? Why did he make him look so ugly?"

I said, "He's painting himself. He feels that life is full of suffering, so he has painted himself like this..."

He laughed, "You say that he's very famous, then he must have a lot of money, so how can he be suffering? I don't believe you. If he's suffering, the rest of us might as well kill ourselves..."

He politely refused to trade, claiming that he did not understand the paintings.

Leaving the little workshop, I came upon a small bookstore where there was a book rental counter. The manager was a bespectacled young man. I showed him the album and asked him if he would trade it for one of his books. He immediately refused, saying, "No one would want to read this book of yours and no one would want to buy it. The pictures are so ugly. They look like demons, how inauspicious...Why don't you go sell it at the recycling depot, see if they will take it..?"

I asked him where the recycling depot was. He was surprised, "You really want to sell it? It was just a thought..."

I said, "Actually, I think it's a great suggestion. I'll go try it."

Following his directions to a southwest corner of the city, I found a neighborhood filled with junk shops. I stopped in over ten shops specializing in paper recycling. The reason every one of them refused my offer: "We can't just take a single book, it has to be a bundle of them so that they can be weighed on these scales..."

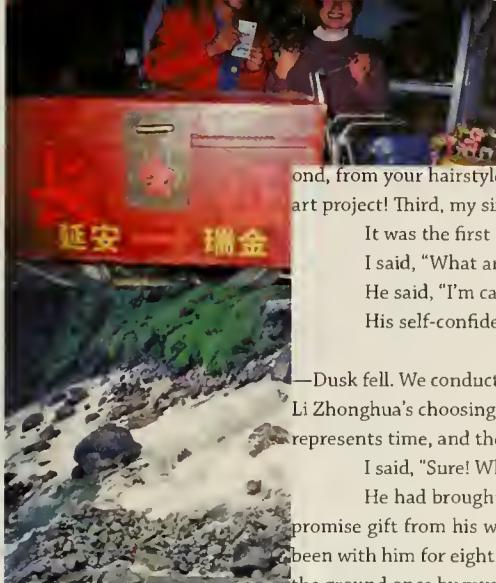
I had to leave that place!

July 27, Liuding

Li Zhonghua was a Lisu ethnic minority from Nujiang in Yunnan province. He graduated from the Chinese language department of the Yunnan Mingzhu College and now he was a mid-level cadre in the tax bureau. He was another friend that I made on my Long March!

We had first encountered each other at the ticket stand at the Kanding bus stop. He said to me, "From the moment you got off the bus to help those four foreigners find their connecting bus, I have been watching you! First, from your trunk, I can see that you are walking the Long March! Sec-





ond, from your hairstyle I know that you are an artist! Moreover, you must be conducting a *xingwei* art project! Third, my sixth sense tells me that you will become my friend!"

It was the first time in my journey that I heard a stranger say the words, "*xingwei* art."

I said, "What are you, a seer? How do you know that we will definitely become friends?"

He said, "I'm cannot see the future, but I have strong skills of observation!"

His self-confidence and frankness fascinated me!

—Dusk fell. We conducted our exchange on the banks of the Dadu river. This was a time and place of Li Zhonghua's choosing. He said, "Selecting this place has to do with the water and the bridge; water represents time, and the bridge represents space..."

I said, "Sure! What we are performing here is just one fragmentary moment among many..."

He had brought along two trade items: one pair of magnetic kissing figurines, which was a promise gift from his wife when she was just his girlfriend; one tax administrator's cap, which had been with him for eight years of his tax-administration career. He said, "This cap has been thrown to the ground once by myself, and once by someone else...!"

He told me that he would give the necklace that I had traded to him to his wife as a wedding anniversary gift! Neither I nor the Tibetan lady Jin Zehua in Kanding could have imagined that the necklace symbolizing the pinnacle of her creative achievements would now become a token of a husband and wife's "Long March" love, and that it would ultimately find its way back to Kanding.

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Aug 5 Qujing

I needed to trade that 50 RMB bill now in my trunk for something new, to put it back into the market system.

I picked out a shop selling all sorts of little things, because its many miscellaneous items made me think of what it was like to be an itinerant peddler. Nearly everything in the little shop turned out to be counterfeits. From "Rolex" watches to "Playboy" wallets, and so much more.

The shopkeeper was a young man from Hunan. I opened up the trunk and bluntly asked him, "What can this 50 RMB bill buy?"

His face was filled with suspicion: "What kind of business are you in, sir?"

My clothes and my direct manners clearly made him suspicious of my background. I changed my tone and calmly told him about my Long March as well as my exchanges and trades along the way, also telling him that I was an artist and not a businessman.

He seemed to understand what I was talking about. Gradually his doubts seemed to ease. He picked up the 50 RMB bill and meticulously examined it, rubbed it, and then, he brought out a currency-testing machine and tested it. Finally he asked me, "What do you want to buy?"

From his cautious behavior it was obvious that he was still suspicious of me.

I said, "Anything. Whatever you think this money can buy. You choose."

He fussed around for over twenty minutes and finally settled on three things: One counterfeit Japanese Citizen man's watch, one pocket radio of a generic brand, and one counterfeit "imported" wind-proof lighter.

I said: "The money is real, yet all these things you've chosen are fake..."

He said: "If you think they're fake then they're fake. If you think they're real, then they're real. This is called dialectics. Understand?"—

Broadcast Culture: The Fate of the Arts in the Space of British Radio (1927-1945)

By Shundana Yusaf

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Over the years, the physical apparatus of radio has evolved from a heavy piece of living room furniture or a home made box with leaky batteries to a smaller, lighter and wireless transistor built into our walkmans and watches.¹ In addition to this portability, Samuel Weber has pointed to radio's power to transport audition where the rest of body cannot go, something that has challenged the classical notion of perception.² More recently, Alan Weiss has explored the value of disembodiment of voice on radio and the liberation of sound from its source.³ Focusing on the history of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), I, in this paper, will examine the roles of these structurally specific movements produced by radio in another kind of portability that it introduced—the portability of high culture to locations hitherto inaccessible to it. It is this aspect of movement that most ignited the imagination of the first generation of Continental cultural theorists who witnessed radio's speedy incorporation into everyday life. Thinking of the performative and visual arts, Theodor Adorno speculated that the new "technology of distribution" would also change "that which is distributed."⁴ Filippo T. Marinetti dreamed of an aerial art, liberated and uninhibited by the geographical and ideological constraints of existing genres.⁵ Frank Warschauer took stock of the disruptive effects of broadcast opera being "delivered to the residential dwellings like gas and water."⁶ The foremost concern of these observers was the status of traditional forms of artistic expression at the threshold of electronic mass diffusion. More precisely, what was to be the fate of arts—traditionally encountered in the controlled settings of concert halls, salons and museums, and by limited, relatively informed audiences—when they were confronted for the first time with the option of being transported directly into differently mediated setting of the homes of a diverse and enlarged audience courtesy of radio?

While it is difficult to address this question in places like the United States, Luxemburg and Normandy, where the culture

broadcasted was largely populist, the history of radio in Britain followed a trajectory that enables us to explore it. There, the early BBC had monopoly over the airwaves. This freed it from commercial competition and the perpetual need to cater to existing demand, and allowed it to take up a pedagogic agenda. Presuming the ease of broadcasting to diverse audiences, the Corporation leadership attempted to turn radio into an authoritative instrument for the improvement of knowledge, taste and manners.

My inquiry into the BBC's attempts to transport artistic production, and architecture in particular, reveals this process to be fraught with challenges. This attempt robbed artistic production of its self-evidence, that is, it tested the belief, perpetuated most prominently by Kantian aesthetics, that art was something pre-given, immediately recognizable and whose virtues were only awaiting discovery by those gifted with the ability of aesthetic judgment. The microphone forced artists, critics and other aesthetes to clarify the postulates of art appreciation and spell out the virtues of their activities to a public that listener research, letters and popular press had already confirmed would not be persuaded by esoteric arguments. I use the word "forced" advisedly because radio "forced" speakers to rationalize something that was commonly believed to be spontaneous, and that resisted rationalization as it was (as argued by Pierre Bourdieu) nothing other than socially determined inculcation.⁷ This predicament unsettled the existing hierarchy between the lesser or applied arts like architecture, industrial design and town planning and the finer arts like painting and sculpture. In the social space of radio, the applied arts became the ambassadors of the more elevated arts.

The BBC's endeavor to democratize what it considered to be "culture," highlights the cleavage between competing approaches to symbolic consumption. It challenges the commonplace conception of broadcasting as a free floating and uninhibited system of conveyance. Instead, the deployment of broadcasting for accul-

turation of masses proved it to be first and foremost a system of *im-portability*, one obstructed and contained by the gap between the perceptual schemata of producers and the expanded audience it engendered.

Between 1927 and 1945, the BBC aired more than 300 programs, published 600 articles, printed several books and pamphlets, and sponsored at least one symposium on architecture related topics, involving no less than 120 speakers and an additional 50 writers. It supplemented this endeavor with weekly programs on the home and garden, and on travel accounts of worthy sites and locations. In so doing, the BBC provided a platform for the articulation of views about issues such as town planning, housing, civic responsibility, architectural history, modern life, and art appreciation, giving voice to the extreme poles of the field—from knighted architects to powerful administrators. It shaped radio into a wireless classroom for promoting the designer's point of view.

Inside the BBC "broadcasting service [wa]s looked to as..." merely extending and "...giving [to all] the best there is."⁸ For the Corporation, broadcasting the designer's point of view was just a matter of adapting the constraints and opportunities of the medium to pre-established content. It celebrated the transmission of programs that would be heard simultaneously by an unprecedentedly large number of people—for its ability to "overcome distance."⁹ Cultural distance was seen as a function of physical distance. Its administrators saw in radio the ability to carry the voice where the constraints of the body had previously kept it from reaching, and the tools for surmounting the gap between the mental worlds of "educated" and "ignorant" classes. In the words of Director General John Reith, radio could take "an event, [to the] very room [of the listener]...It comes in such a way that enjoyment on the one hand, and assimilation on the other, is induced with comparatively little effort...[but with] great effect."¹⁰ Radio, for him was the newfound power of commanding at a distance. "The roads to be laid are not

merely for passages of transport...but for influences...which shall be permanent and good and widespread."¹¹

The BBC provided art and architecture speakers access to a colossal classroom with invisible walls and admission potentially open to the entire country. The loss of scale and sociability of a physical classroom made for pedagogic conditions entirely different than those established by the professional press, the gallery exhibition or touring. These older modes of publicity catered to a public that believed in the symbolic value of works as a value for itself. The public sphere structured by radio did not demand the motivation or even attention of listeners as did museum visits or reading. It was more diverse, more dispersed, less demanding. Correspondence, reviews, newspaper cartoons, and independent opinion surveys confirmed to producers and speakers that which recent land use patterns, preservation debates and consumer preferences had already signaled; the majority of the public did not much care for works on aesthetic value alone. Their material worth played a far more important role in public evaluation. Minus a handful of aesthetes and intellectuals, Peter Mandler argues, the wider public, if not absolutely hostile to broadcasted definitions of culture, did not see any virtue in conversion to it.¹²

Visual arts that have historically relied on sight for their cognition faced further challenges from the dissonance between their mode of expression and the artifice of radio. Radio relies solely on the ear in informing us about the objects of the world around us. Transmission of sound through a microphone, as Rudolf Arnheim has noted, cannot convey information of the position and the distance of the source of sound from it, making it a poor medium for spatial representation.¹³ Second, by separating the sense of hearing from the sense of seeing, radio delocalizes and disembodies the relation of the listener to the objects it aims at representing. The dissociation of sense-perception—that is, of audition from vision—under-

mines the ability of the recipients to visually validate the received information. The use of a medium that weakens judgment more than usual, for building a community of aesthetic judges as aimed by the program executives, put unprecedented pressure on speech and explication and opened up these topics for entirely unpredictable types of debates outside the protective edifice of the institution of art.

In *Rules of Art*, Pierre Bourdieu has demonstrated that the existence of a work of art as a symbolic system endowed with value depends on nothing but its' being believed to be such. This belief, he notes, is produced, not by qualities internal to works but by the institution of art (involving competing artists, critics, historians, publishers, teachers, etc.). By circulating the ideas of art-producers to groups with little familiarity and therefore little regard for the institutional protocols that lent these ideas their authority, radio placed the discourse outside this shelter. This separation cheated cultural production of its historically secured self-evidence. Nothing concerning art was given anymore, "not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist."¹⁴ The BBC, in inviting art producers to interest and transform the expanded public into a public for the consumption of art, put speakers on the defensive, on a trial as it were.

The title of a 1940's interview series "Artist in the Witness Box," captures this predicament.¹⁵ Philosophies of art appreciation which previously had attributed a natural and magical synergy between works and the taste or psychology of spectators, ceased to suffice. The scripted conversation between the architect-critic John Gloag and artist Edward Halliday underlines the deadlock:

J.G.: And that brings us back to the point again: how are people to know what is good design and what isn't?...For example, Halliday, how does one know what is bad pattern on a piece of cretonne? We all believe that we know good from bad, but can we give reasons?

E.H.: That's a very deep subject, Gloag....

J.G.: The question of taste's too big a subject to be talked out tonight...¹⁶

Artists, architects and critics responded to this predicament by packaging their formal and ideological preferences (or beliefs one may say) in different forms and genres. Historian John Summerson used travelogues to convert public opinion over the volatile matter of preservation of stately homes.¹⁷ Design critic Geoffrey Boumphrey knitted a functionalist history of British domestic architecture into children's stories entitled: "Your

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An example of early portable radio operated with dry batteries, modeled after a large handbag, advertised in Radio Times, 1939.

Home and Mine." Renaissance art historian Anthony Bertram adopted a home-companion-style advice column on interior and garden design targeting housewives with an income of eight pounds a week. Gloag with others developed programs that were essentially shopping guides to "sound and sensible selection."¹⁸ What one witnesses is the reinvention of the image of high arts in the age of popular culture in terms that historiography is only recently beginning to address.

Charles Siepmann of the BBC's department of Adult Education, wanted to offer the ordinary listener, something palpable to hook them onto the abstract spiritual rewards of aesthetic experience.¹⁹ In this endeavor architecture and design came out much better. The demand of relating, say, a Picasso or a Gainsborough to the everyday concerns of listeners was a tall order. The more adventurous critics accommodated this demand. Herbert Read called for the reinvention of artists as designers.²⁰ Eric Newton asked for accessible and enjoyable public art.²¹ But "before you make any judgment of a work of art," went the advice of archeologist Stanley Casson, "look very closely at it indeed, and ask yourself what was the intention of the artist, what did he think and want when he did it."²² Despite such overtures, when it came to the "concrete" value of art, most artists and critics inevitably turned to spiritual or psychological explanations.

Architecture, in the estimate of Hilda Matheson (Talks Department) and Richard Lambert (Publishing Section), made a far more robust topic of conversation than the visual arts. Its attraction for them—to be echoed in the programs they produced—lay in architecture's combination of artistry and use, the esoteric and the mundane, the visible and the functional. Architecture was an "object man makes for use in which he has some freedom of choosing shapes, colors, textures, and so on, *for their own sakes*."²³ The executives viewed the combination as a bridge between the utilitarian taste of the new public and the aesthetic perception demanded

by "sincere" works. Accordingly, "the illustrations I have chosen," Head of London Transport, Frank Pick assured his listeners, are "homely" and "familiar," "that have nothing to do with art or aesthetics, or beauty in itself and yet they may be artistic or beautiful."²⁴ Broadcasts presented architecture as an artist's gesture made in the street. "Architecture has its business as well as its aesthetic side" was the message.²⁵ It was a genre possessing greater familiarity factor than any other art. "Next to literature, architecture is the most social of the arts, the one most mixed up with our daily life."²⁶ That it was perceived inattentively by users and passersby was all to the good. For program producers, great buildings rose above their worldly entanglements and had as much cultural worth as art and literature. The public existence of buildings gave them a much greater power of cultural education and enlightenment than other arts. Professor A.E. Richardson insisted that, "Each person who has the cause of education at heart will realize the enormous influence a really good station [a public building] could exercise on the mass mind."²⁷ The experience of domestic, work and public places (churches, schools, hospitals, shops), they estimated, gave the listeners, who did not have a regular contact with "works," the necessary preparation to be interested in the topic. Its involvement in questions of shelter, safety, and health made it topical and an issue of general interest. All in all, these properties made architecture a better fit than the fine arts with the Corporation's search for topics that promised outreach without sacrificing the mandate of "uplift."

The Corporation drew out the socially relevant elements in contemporary architectural movements of all stripes; including Arts and Crafts vernacularists, Edwardians, as well as proto-Continental modernists. But the modernists were most successful in relating the revolution in representational conventions ushered by Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Alvar Aalto to the possibilities of "architecture for everyone." As confirmed by the public response,

their exaltation of “fitness for purpose” was accepted as more open to the mass-public.²⁸ Boumphrey and Casson argued that the modern aesthetic demanded nothing but “common sense” from its users and spectators, graduating potentially everyone to competent judges.²⁹ The common man, they both stressed, bringing a fresh eye to works made a better spectator than those whose eyes and taste had been corrupted and fatigued by contact with traditional works.³⁰ Purpose embracing several aspects, use, health, safety, firmness, ease of maintenance, synthetic materials and financial logic—which the mid-nineteenth century in search of artistic autonomy had tried to shed off from the conception of architecture—now returned. Industrial exhibitions enabled architects like Serge Chermayeff, Maxwell Fry and Wells Coates to show that modern design could bring the artists work out of its prior seclusion and take it to every shop if not every home in England. Gloag and Bertram stressed how contemporary industrial design could infuse everyday things from toilet seats, to white walls, to kitchenware, with the psychic energy of a designer.³¹

The conceptual packaging of modernism promoted by F.R. Yerbury, Howard Robertson and Maxwell Fry was singularly attractive to the BBC. Although the built environment represented a minuscule fraction of the overall programming output—on average filling 20 minutes every two weeks—the professed attributes of modern architecture enabled the BBC to express the cultural modernity it wished to generate: namely, culture made accessible to everyone. It also crystallized for the Corporation the terms on which aesthetic production could be democratized and the gap between, what was considered legitimate and popular cultures, negotiated.

This aerial transportation of high cultural pedagogy across social divisions via radio introduced a new order of things. In the space of radio, a different hierarchy of symbolic systems appeared. Built environment, the most worldly and the least independent of artistic expressions, emerged as the representative of all cultural production.

BBC’s attempts at transforming the eye constituted outside the institution of art to an aesthetic eye so that it perceived art according to its evaluative criteria, did not find a free, frictionless path in broadcasting. Instead, it was an obstacle course, full of detours that demanded new strategies of maneuver. Though architectural programming was a practical response to the challenges of cultural pedagogy, it sustained the enlightenment and liberal belief in the universality of artistic communication and the construct that broadcasting was really nothing more than a means of transportation of influence “which shall be permanent and good and widespread.”³²

Travels of the Carpet Myth: Retracing Owen Jones, Ibn Khaldun, and Gottfried Semper

By Anneka Lenssen

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In the mid-19th century, there was a moment when major thinkers argued for the textile's centrality in the theoretical origins of architecture. They assigned "ornament" a central place in global architectural development, and constructed a "carpet myth" that saw every building as the culmination of the primeval nomadic tent made from patterned fabrics. Passing into an ahistorical nomadism where "Bedouin" signifies the eternal pre-modernity of Western Arabia, a version of the carpet myth persists even today. In the historiography of Islamic art, scholars who search for the essence of Islamic art continue to advance surface over structure, describing transferable surface designs as the distinctive cultural product of Islamic civilization.¹ Witness historian Lisa Golombek's stunning assertion in her 1988 paper, "The Draped Universe of Islam," that Islamic art in all media including book bindings, wood carving, architectural faience, and Qur'an pages, "look like carpets."² Golombek describes the entire Islamic world as "awash with textiles," seeing "drapery" on everything from everyday art objects to the tiled interior of the Friday Mosque at Yazd in Iran, to the animals in 9th-century fresco paintings at Samarra in Iraq. Golombek is not alone in transmuting geometric and arabesque patterning into textiles, despite the claim's unabashed ahistoricism.³

The scope of the carpet myth in 19th-century European architectural theory can best be seen in the work of its two canonic authors, English architect Owen Jones and German architect Gottfried Semper. In Jones' 1842 magisterial dissection of the Alhambra palace complex, he located the origin of its architecture in the textiles of the nomadic tent.⁴ In the 1860 *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, Semper developed the "carpet wall" as a universal motive of architectural creation that is expressed through pliable materials like woven reeds, textiles, and (in his final analysis) all divisions of space.⁵ These theories can be understood as an attempt to sublimate the intellectual anxiety of industrial modernization; by mid-century, culture watchers were all claiming that

mechanized imitation in the applied arts and architecture plagued the aesthetics of England's manufactured objects. London's *Great Exhibition of Products of Industry of All Nations* of 1851 famously showcased the pallid quality of English goods in comparison to those made by its colonies. Jones oversaw the exhibition as Superintendent of Works, while Semper styled merchandise displays for Turkey, Canada, Sweden, and Denmark.⁶ In such a milieu, the two architects' writings are notable for their protean form of Orientalism, minting an ideology where nothing demonstrably natural nor pleasing is foreign to the designer. Working before Adolf Loos made ornament into a modern crime, they displaced notions of "authentic experience" into an aesthetic register of monumental ornament that is predicated on access to common origins.⁷ The carpet emblematised a socially contingent, nomadic model for ideal design.

To accept this trajectory for ornament and culture, one must first remember that Semper and Jones derived their "carpet" conclusions from a shared starting point: the revelation of polychromy in the first half of the 19th century.⁸ Polychromy is a primal scene for the idealization of portable textile design. The slowly dawning revelation that the monuments of ancient Greece had not been conceived as elegant white marbles, but rather brilliantly painted and only later stripped by the weather, lured the cultured class with the promise of discovering the residue of ancient polychromatic paints. Thus Jones and the French architect Jules Goury traveled to Al-Andalus in 1834, where they romped around its languishing buildings collecting evidence. Their detailed drawings and plans become the 1842 *Alhambra* volume. Two years earlier, Semper had taken his own trip south with Goury to Greece in 1831-32, and from those findings, published a commentary on ancient architectural polychromy in 1834.⁹ In these expeditions, fact-finding operated at the empirical level of toting away paper impressions, casts, and paint scrapings.¹⁰ However, the material



nature of their souvenirs of kaleidoscopic color did not make for a runaway materialism. Rather, they signaled the newly dislocatable extra-materiality that historian Mark Wigley has proposed as Semper's textile essence: the material is a sign because it does not "play" as a solid.¹¹

Jones' *Alhambra* volume, published with new chromolithographic technology in full awareness of its commercial potential, is a triumph of this portable polychromatic vision.¹² The volume's plans and sections primarily articulate an armature for imagining the restoration of spectacular surfaces. For example, describing the brilliantly colored illustrations of the capitals of the columns in the Hall of the Ambassadors, Jones writes that no one who "mentally restores the coloring of the parts above" can suppose that they were ever originally left white.¹³ The publishing format ensures that the reader sees this; by a turn of the page, color is indeed restored and the preceding line drawings of columns (fig. 2) are given an authoritative full-color dress (fig. 3). Jones' 1854 pamphlet, *An Apology for the Colouring of the Greek Court in the Crystal Palace*, extended the logic of polychromatic surface ornament, this time to the most classic of buildings.¹⁴ Running through the evidence for the presence of paint on ancient Greek structures, Jones concluded that the molded "mark of the pattern" on the walls was merely an aid for repainting the brilliant colors of the design when they fade.¹⁵ Thus, architectural forms were assigned a subordinate position as mere supports for skeins of painted decoration. In line with the project of formalizing the significance of polychromatic surface over architectural form, Semper's eventual theory of *Bekleidung*, or dressing, revolved around the notion of the "true and legitimate representatives of the wall, the colorful woven carpets."¹⁶

Of course, the appeal of the detachable surface was sustained by more than the easy drama of polychromy. The *Alhambra* volume makes a claim for a universal impulse to textile-like pat-

terns but it also purports to describe a racial Other, the "peculiar sentiment that pervades the works of the Arabs."¹⁷ Jones' key introductory passage declares:

*The prohibition to represent animal life, caused them to seek for other means of decoration, —inscriptions from the Koran, interwoven with geometrical ornaments and flowers, not drawn decidedly from nature, but translated through the loom; for it would seem that the Arabs, in changing their wandering for a settled life, —in striking the tent to plant it in a form more solid, had transferred the luxurious shawls and hangings of Cachmere, which had adorned their former dwellings, to their new, —changing the tent-pole for a marble column, and the silken tissue for gilded plaster.*¹⁸

Here deriving the Alhambra's marble geometries from Arab woven hangings, the textiles are the saleable products of the negotiation between desert and sedentary life. They figure not just in Jones' understanding of the marketplace, but also in the ethnography and historiography of his text. The volume in its entirety takes these silken "hangings" into the realm of the monumental, and allegorical.

Significant to the grander implications of the carpet myth, the passage's specific rhetorical phrasing likely came to Jones by way of a Spanish Arabist named Pascual de Gayangos. He is the relatively obscure author of the "historical prologue" at the start of the *Alhambra* volume, a dynastic history of Al-Andalus and North Africa.¹⁹ His role as transmitter is evidenced by the striking similarity between the Jones passage and that of the 12th-century Nasrid author whom de Gayangos excerpts in his prologue.²⁰ The Nasrid text describes a mosque addition in the Alhambra complex decorated with "exquisite tracery" supported by "innumerable" pillars of "polished marble."²¹ Jones' account that the tent pole was replaced "for the marble column" simply works the idea of luxury

and origins more assiduously, converting the Nasrid tracery into a Kashmiri shawl.²²

By recognizing de Gayangos' role in transmitting Jones' model of Arab expression, we begin to find, throughout the space of European design, signs of a 14th-century Arab theorist: Ibn Khaldun.²³ De Gayangos dealt extensively with the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun's introduction to history, most notably its version of the formation of the political corpus by a series of tribal incursions into sedentary civilizations. For example, calling Ibn Khaldun "celebrated and most accurate," de Gayangos translated Ibn Khaldun's account of the 12th-century onslaught of the Almohads in Al-Andalus, and the dynasty's inveterate nomadic life and failure to establish proper social structures, for the appendix to his annotated edition of a 17th-century history of "Mohammedan dynasties" by al-Maqqari.²⁴ The Khaldunian history of the fleetingness of sovereign states prescribes a continual process of converting the nomadic spirit into institutions of central government. As an authoritative "authentic" Arab text in fresh circulation, the *Muqaddima* offered a model for a good society that satisfied the moral and aesthetic desires of 19th-century designers. Because legitimate cultural expressions reflected the perceived equality and allegiance of desert life, virtue could be assayed by creative production. The Khaldunian spirit of "group feeling" cultivated by Bedouin leaders, *asabiyah*, even offered prescriptions for building within a shifting, proto-urbanist environment.²⁵ Ibn Khaldun argues that property is the goal (or result) of the *'asabiyah* and that the nation will maintain its sovereign property only as long as it preserves that collective coherence.²⁶

An example of the *Muqaddima* as a quiet confirmation of Jones' design theories is the following series of exchanges between tents, towns, cities, and palaces, identical to Jones' much later passage. Ibn Khaldun writes:

*People settled in towns and cities. They were transformed from tent dwellers into palace dwellers. They exchanged the camel for the horse and the donkey as riding animals. Now, they used linen fabrics for their dwellings on their journeys, fashioning them into houses (tents) of various shapes and sizes, round, oblong, or square.*²⁷

With this passage, we realize that Jones takes its sequential ebb and flow of civilization building and makes another trade: this fabric for "gilded plaster." By these allusive histories, a high-mindedness is lent to the descriptions of various "dressings" at the 1851

Great Exhibition, as in the description of one manufacturer's paper hangings: "the style of the decoration adopted in that far-famed building—the Alhambra—has been chosen, and re-produce with great success, and at a cost which enables the moderately-wealthy to rival the dearly-purchased luxuries of the East."²⁸ The Khaldunian link is particularly significant because he described a model of an "original" man whose craft is not a function of innocence, but rather a reflection of man's relationship to each other, as in the basic bonds that determine the nomad's life, death and, and aesthetic desire. By reading a socially contingent legitimacy onto structures of nomadic civilization, the carpet myth renders those original aesthetics perennially available—to the vested interests of later writers, or to manifest as Asiatic products that fulfill the newly salient allegories for authentic objecthood.²⁹

Here, Gottfried Semper's theory of *Bekleidung* is especially instructive if we see it as a demonstration of the perceived global relevance of the carpet wall. Semper arrived in London at the height of Jones' influence as a prophet of design for the industrial age.³⁰ In the crucible of metropolitan hand wringing and in a kind of post-polychromy flush, he looked to the accomplishment of the non-Western objects in *The Great Exhibition* as models for improved design. They became his source material for his 1860 *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*.³¹ Semper's theories of portable origins also put the eventual reversal of our interpretive logic for non-Western forms into relief. In the 20th century, renewed commitment to the singular nature of the peripheral Arab stripped mainstream narratives away from "ethnic" figures like Ibn Khaldun.

In *Style*, Semper replaced all previous architectural origin myths with his carpet myth. His theory of the origins of architecture is based on the act of enclosing space with a woven surface:

*There are writers who devote much time to searching for the origin of art... Yet while with great acumen they detect in the catenary curve of the tent the norm of the Tartar-Chinese way of building (although the same shapes occur in the caps and shoes of these people), they overlook the more general and less dubious influence that the carpet in its capacity as a wall, as a vertical means of protection, had on the evolution of certain architectural forms. Thus I seem to stand without the support of a single authority when I assert that the carpet wall plays a most important role in the general history of art.*³²

From here, Semper derived his theory of *Bekleidung* from nearly

3

every imaginable source of human activity, from chisel marks on stonework, to the basket-weave pattern of a column capital, to the alabaster wall panels employed by the ancient Assyrians.³³ In fact, for Semper *Bekleidung* is so basic a human expression that, in his timeline of human activity, encampments pre-date clothing.³⁴ Yet as this quote suggests, Semper's theory of the "primitive hut" is predicated neither on the hut's utility, nor on its simplicity. The nomadic tent is merely an example of the most original articulation of space because the carpet wall is the significant principle in any built form. By this hierarchy, the scaffolds that support enclosures are irrelevant to the origin of architecture because they do not divide three-dimensional space. His reasoning makes it a "natural" act to veil the structural components of architectural monuments with festive surface pattern.

Semper's theory of legitimacy in architecture is a fascinating manifestation of post-Industrial Revolution morality of the universalist sort I have outlined, for each "carpet" holds the potential for its mass production if civilizational merit is maintained. For the realization of the ultimate form of the carpet wall, Semper still requires a deserving society. Assessing architecture in modern-day Mesopotamia, he employs what we can now recognize as remarkably Khaldunian criteria to dismiss the validity of its apparent naturalness:

The tribes that now graze their flocks among the desolate ruins of the Mesopotamian hills are, like Abraham, no longer aware of the times when their fathers united to form large and powerful social bands. It is more correct to see the provisional tents and smalahs they use today as symbols of their current lack of peace and homeland than it is to call them prototypes for Oriental architecture.³⁵

We see that for Semper, because these tents are wrought in the tumultuous present, they are merely "provisional," not fully realized reflections of an authentically cohesive group.³⁶ His argument is also a modular one. Objects must always be dressed with the powerful patterned bands that represent natural polity. If Ibn Khaldun's writings prescribed a spirit of desert chivalry for the Andalusian dynasties (no matter the absence of desert conditions in the region), Semper's model is the 19th-century teleology where "industry" is the definition of sedentary, and the "nomadic" is a romantic wistfulness for a self-determined life. Here, any tapestry-like surface of buildings becomes a record of trading a nomadic life for a sedentary one.

Tracing the travels of the carpet myth in architectural theory reveals a prickly type of modernist discourse that critiqued both classicism (by arguing for its polychromy) and modernization (by its nomadic negotiation), all the while leveraging the rhetoric of cultural specificity to ramify its global significance. We see that claims for the portability of authentic Islamic art—demonstrated by the claim that all Islamic forms "look the same"—are not explained by the autonomy of ornament that is usually supposed. Nostalgia for authenticity and its mythic textiles, still operative today, bestows the category of "Islamic art" with its veneer of timelessness. Epitomized by the "draped world" of the specter of original Arabs, we see Arab expression typecast as a heroic negotiation with desert conditions, buoyed by complex national and religious currents. In this diminished space, Ibn Khaldun, Jones, and Semper arbitrate the reading of Islamic art as a perennial reproduction of nomadism.

02

LAS DE LOS EMBAZADORES Y DE LAS DOS HERMANAS



03

LAS ALHAMBRA

Mobile Foundations: US-Mexico Construction(s)

By Carlos Martín

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Global Constructions

While global development projects are traditionally studied for their symbolic and political import, their physical construction demonstrates design's uniqueness in perpetuating and, at times, subverting formal politics. Often, the means and methods of building in different sites point to assumptions about labor, technology, and industrial achievement that determine the politics and form of design interventions. But, exchanges in design and construction knowledge are also inscribed in these practices in ways that subvert those same assumptions. As professionals, we study *formal* design globalization when, in fact, globalization is transpiring *informally* to a much larger extent. Increased accessibility to design tools and products across national borders and the acquiring of construction skills through immigration and labor mobility, for example, are insuring more prevalent changes in design than formal and heavy-handed projects in both the First and Third World.

Choices made by designers in one location not only determine the construction methods and materials used at another, but are also informed by assumptions regarding the latter's social and industrial achievement. Many of the social inequities that have been linked with transnational design exchanges in the past reproduce broader injustices: assumptions regarding lack of technological capacity; purported labor surpluses and subsequent skill and wage disparities; and an ostensible need for guidance into modern environments. If "technological maximization... is often antithetical to the creation and maintenance of the place-form," as Kenneth Frampton suggests, then the design and technical choices made in building "here" and "elsewhere" are inextricably linked to how we perceive and imagine these places.¹

This paper illustrates the discrepancy in architectural production between First World design and building circles and

Third World interventions in the built landscape. I especially look at the technological authority assumed by US architects and engineers; the effect of that authority on the nationalizing, racializing, and classing of construction labor and design skill; and the symbolic use of design and construction as a sign of modernization. Rather than looking at specific buildings or projects as canonical examples of transnational and transcultural exchanges, though, this paper addresses broader changes in the economic and cultural transactions of design and construction skills and labor across the US-Mexico border.

Local Constructions: Mexico

In 1999, Tarcicio Ramírez, a practicing architect and contractor from Guadalajara, Mexico, visited San Francisco and was most taken by the wide and immediate accessibility of materials and information available in a big-box construction store like Home Depot (fig.1). Although Ramírez was already well-acquainted with the plethora of products available at Home Depot, what most excited him was the limitless access to them. The ability to get information and goods for his small practice easily and directly represented a departure from the situation he is familiar with in Guadalajara—where he imagined that such stores could provide small-scale architects and contractors with new building ideas and techniques. By his estimation, they would provide both professionals and ordinary consumers in Guadalajara—one of Mexico's emerging centers for post-NAFTA manufacturing and information technology work—with the chance to pick the best solution for their particular problem from a wealth of choices. What Ramírez left the store with was not just product propaganda, but the belief that Home Depot could act as a democratizing source of goods, a kit of tools that would both aid his design skill and capacity, and simultaneously aid in a collective project of national development in Mexico.



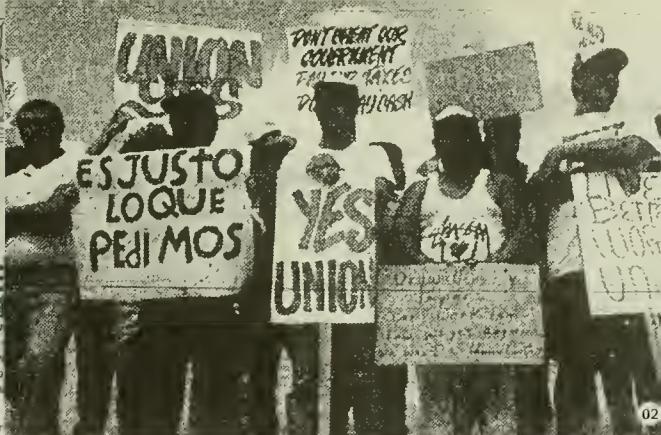
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The Home Depot Advertisement, 2000

Newspaper Photograph of Union Protesters in the Southern California Drywall Trades

Of course, this project extended well beyond Ramírez' purview, though it had taken a unique form at the same time. In fact, appropriateness and its related designs and technologies took on a particularly nationalist form in Mexico from 1988 to 1994, the years of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's administration. In addition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Harvard-trained Salinas implemented a major developmental policy for improving national economics and individual circumstance: the *Programa Nacional de Solidaridad*, more commonly known as *Solidaridad*, or Solidarity. Design and construction were specific targets for the national government, as they have been in developing nations for quite some time.² *Solidaridad*, however, suggested a change in the interactions between developed and developing people through informal design exchanges.

Begun in December of 1988, *Solidaridad* was described as a way to combine foreign (particularly, US) knowledge with Mexican know-how and human capital for local development projects. As such, the program would create a new and appropriate exchange of design and construction services and technologies. Contrary to traditional governmental interventions, *Solidaridad* required the formation of local committees to assess the social and economic needs of their respective regions. They would suggest possible development projects, and then serve as labor on those projects. Four "basic principles" would guide these projects: respect for community decisions, collective participation, mutual responsibility between the government and communities, and the honest management of tasks.³

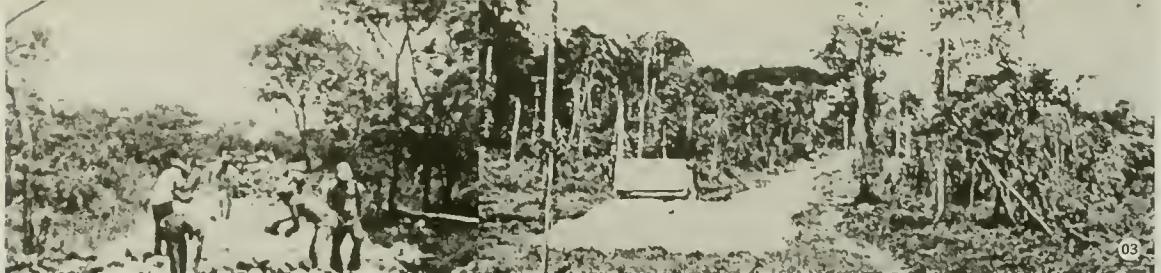
Within a few years, over 100,000 *Solidaridad* committees were established in urban, rural, and indigenous communities throughout the country. Each was organized in such a way that its community's members would be enlisted to work cooperatively on construction projects.⁴ In so doing, the national govern-

ment believed it could "avoid the dependence and paternalism" of the past by both increasing employment and incorporating local citizens into the design choices and technological decisions that would affect their surroundings.⁵ As such, *Solidaridad* would create a uniquely Mexican design and technology development program, one that formally provides for informal exchanges.

For new design and construction to be "more in line with our resources," the government and *Solidaridad* committees would transform "all technical decisions into sociopolitical ones."⁶ The building and construction industry was viewed as the most viable sector for this negotiation because of its history as a strong employer, its reliance on manual work, and its explicitly social importance. Analysts pointed out past evils in governmental projects to demonstrate the need for *Solidaridad* designs. Among the most infamous examples of poorly-conceived architecture included the specification of aluminum roofs for housing in the Mexican tropics (which, of course, rusted immediately) and of cement block buildings in the middle of interior forests (where timber construction would have been less costly and material intensive).

Architects and engineers were called on to research materials like adobe brick and passive heating and cooling systems as part of the environmentally, socially, and economically "appropriate" goals of the project. More directly, Mexican architects and engineers were called upon to accommodate their traditional practices and tools to make them more national: "Engineers must participate in this... national process of design and construction." The new professional skill was even given the label "rural engineering and design."⁷

Solidaridad, however, failed in part because of this. While architects and engineers were asked to change their practices, they were not asked to change their social positions. Designers and engineers maintained the same authority over their design



Road Construction Under Solidaridad

and construction knowledge rather than sharing them with the committees. In fact, each committee's projects were headed by an engineer who was to lead the committees and workers, and to "explain to them how they were to organize as well mention some of the project's characteristics."⁸ Their authority was unquestioned. Traditional social hierarchy was combined with the full-scale importation of design work and technology provided under NAFTA's plans (fig. 3).

NAFTA further undermined attempts at local self-reliance in design. Even before the United States officially approved the trade agreement, US designers and contractors were heading south in record numbers.⁹ Besides being awarded major infrastructure and housing projects, US designers and contractors were also assured that their Mexican counterparts would not make many inroads outside.¹⁰ By the 1993 devaluation of the peso and the political scandals following President Salinas' departure from office, *Solidaridad* was dead, NAFTA was alive and kicking, and the lay communities of Mexico were left with little of the design education and technological skills to which they were meant to have access.¹¹

Unfortunately, such failed developments to institutionalize informal exchanges in knowledge and design are far too common in the history of developing nations. Despite its significant attempts to reconsider design and construction for popular ends, *Solidaridad* proved ineffective because of the same formal political and knowledge structures that it sought to dismantle. Only certain people on both sides of the border had the skills and insight that could have transformed the Mexican social and built landscape. They also retained that power of applying those skills.

Local Construction: United States

During the early years of NAFTA, Mexican architects and contractors actively sought joint ventures with US firms for projects in the United States at the same time that US firms were building all over Mexico. But, a more profound exchange was occurring across the border: immigration. A trip to any construction site in the US Southwest bears witness to these changing labor demographics.

Drywall construction is a particularly interesting case. Nine out of ten drywallers in Southern California today are Latino, and many of them are undocumented.¹² Only two decades ago, the majority of construction workers in the area were White

and union-affiliated. As the design and building sector dried up in the mid-'70s, drywall contractors began hiring undocumented laborers to replace union trades. In 1982, after a heated strike, the contractors broke the union and Latino immigrants soon filled the labor supply.¹³ The work became piecemeal, routine, and thoroughly non-union throughout the 1980s as the design and construction industry tried to come to terms with a depressed housing market.¹⁴ The workers' plight was further exacerbated by low wages, no health care, and fear due to their precarious immigration status. The work itself was increasingly consigned and referred to as "Mexican" work or, as one observer noted, was not even acknowledged at all.¹⁵

Despite such lack of support and even resistance, the Southern Californian drywallers chose to organize themselves—an act that would be regularly compared to the early union organizing of the largely-immigrant United Farm Workers in the 1960s. With the assistance of local Latino aid agencies, Catholic clergy, and the "workers' family and geographical ties to Mexico," drywallers walked off construction sites throughout the Southland in June of 1992 (fig. 2). The strike broke many contractors, who were already feeling the crunch of the California building recession. With freeway blockades, caravans, and public demonstrations in open defiance of building, police, and immigration authorities, the drywallers made themselves and their work known. Five months later, 39 builders signed an organizing agreement with the approximately 4,000 drywallers.¹⁶

The success of the strike was seen as a wake-up call for the building trade unions, and the design and construction industry as a whole. After establishing explicit characteristics for construction work (including so-called low skill tasks and meager salaries) that could only be filled by an implicit labor group (that is, geographically-close undocumented immigrants), builders were faced with the very real possibility of addressing a classed and racialized labor union. The strikes and the ensuing conflict were especially fueled by the scare of California's most recent anti-immigrant episode. Immigration officials launched major raids and deportations against Southern California drywallers just two years after those same workers gained union recognition.¹⁷ Union leaders publicly denounced these attacks, claiming that the INS was targeting drywallers solely because of their recent and successful organizing campaign.¹⁸ Confrontations between the workers, contractors, and land developers became commonplace on the quintessentially Californian design devel-

opment: the Angelino suburban residential tract.²¹

Immigrant construction labor, however, has most surely not ended nor been confined. Latino workers struck a Kaufman and Broad job site in Las Vegas soon after these incidents.²² Even more telling were two related articles that came out in the *Engineering News-Record* at that time: the first reported the hearings of a panel of architects and contractors on "future trends" in building, the most notable of which was the "shortage of skilled, motivated, and loyal employees at levels throughout the construction industry [that was] threatening its survival."²³ The second article—titled "Let in More Mexicans Legally"—called on all design and building-affiliated professionals to push for expanded visa programs for Mexican nationals during "peak times of construction activity" since, in the past, "many illegals who sneaked by [immigration officials] ended up on construction sites."²⁴ Even more recent national debates about immigration have focused on the construction trades.

That the premier journal for project announcements and construction information would print such articles speaks volumes about how design and building professionals see themselves in relation to the skills, capacities, and personal characteristics of their workforce. That the same journal, further, would name *nations* in a manner that opposed recent popular sentiments reveals much more about how race, class, and national status both determine conceptions of design and building practices and perpetuate these across political and cultural boundaries.

In fact, the drywallers' skills and knowledge—or more accurately, the assumptions made regarding their skills and knowledge—were predicated on these social and political categories. Such decisions and professional border-drawing parallel the relations that Mexico's *Solidaridad* and NAFTA established between US design and construction firms and their Mexican counterparts, and between Mexican designers and engineers and the general populace. What is more, this tension between informal exchanges in design from laborers and regular folk and formal claims over design knowledge and policy by professional and governmental bodies will most likely continue throughout future globalization projects.

Constructing the Globe

Institutional attempts to transform building practices have a long history in both developed and developing nations. Informal exchanges have an even longer one. Global practices in design

and construction can no longer be simply described in terms of Western design and technology exports to the developing world, nor in terms of tailoring that technology appropriately to the local developing context. The increasing complexity of global economies and cultural exchanges prohibits such simple readings of contemporary architectural design and construction.

As with most challenges, however, the problem is the solution. *Solidaridad* and other modernization projects in the developing world persist in remaking the class hierarchies that translate into castes of knowledge, skill, and authority. In *Solidaridad*, authority still rested with Mexican engineers and architects and ultimately, with the federal government and foreign (that is, US) design and technology exporters. The Mexican people might have been the formal beneficiaries of these works, but did not retain informal authority over them. Similarly, the exploitation of undocumented immigrant exploitation and the disavowal of their informal skill and contributions remakes skill and information borders along similar motives. In both cases, conceptions of the design and technological *other* serve as the means for reproducing authority and defining formal control—be it the authority of the developed world over the developing, of the building professional over the laborer, or of the building industry over common folk.

As economics and politics obscure geographic borders, culture and technology are blurring traditional lines between design and construction. The daily and ubiquitous transacting of design skills and construction products serve more to break down geopolitical and professional borders. The Home Depot catalogues that Tarcicio took back to Guadalajara and the methods learned by Los Angeles' drywallers will negotiate global design and construction practices in more equitable and less heavy-handed ways. In short, global practices are under our local noses.

Lalibela and Libanos, the King and the Hydro-Engineer of 13th-Century Ethiopia

By Mark Jarzombek

The complex of rock-cut churches in the city of Lalibela, Ethiopia, is celebrated as one of the great religious sites of the world.¹ In a few years, a lofty UNESCO-funded space-frame roof will protect some of the churches from the ravages of heat and time. The attention that this site has received in recent decades has intensified scholarly debates about the churches: How were they built? What religious iconography underlies their design? What was their liturgical function? Were they modelled on the Holy Land? Were all twelve built by King Lalibela who ruled in the early thirteenth century, as tradition claims?² While such issues are central to our understanding of the churches, this paper considers a neglected, if no less important, aspect of this religious site, namely water. I will argue that Lalibela was just as much a hydro-engineering marvel as it was a religious site. In fact, its hydro-engineering not only guaranteed the city's economic foundation, but was also an intrinsic part of its religious message. Needless to say, unlike Petra and Hellenistic-era sites which have long been appreciated for their hydro-engineering, Lalibela is given little recognition in this regard, and this despite the fact that the most astonishing aspect of the pools associated with the churches is that they are located at the top of a high plateau one thousand meters over the valley floor.

To get a broader historical picture of Lalibela, one has to start with the demise of the Axumite civilization in the 8th century CE. Axum, in the north of Ethiopia, rose to prominence in the 4th century BCE as a metal producing center, and as an important regional geo-political power with connections stretching eastward to Yemen across the Red Sea, and westward to Nubia. The foundry, so essential to its wealth, was prominently located just behind the palace in a rise at the centre of a gentle bowl in which the city was spread. Still today, bronze and iron slag from the foundry litters the desert floor. But kilns in those days had devastating consequences for the environment. Requiring vast

amounts of lumber, and it was only a matter of time before the surrounding forests disappeared to expose the vast, quickly eroding and treeless landscape that we see there today. With its metal production diminished and its economy weakened, Axum became vulnerable to civil strife and foreign invaders.

By the 11th century, power shifted to the Zagwe Dynasty, which had its center in the mountain villages of the Ethiopian Highlands to the south of Axum. Though the Zagwe were no longer metal makers but metal importers, they were not necessarily impoverished; nonetheless there was a significant cultural reduction and along with it, a new and simpler power structure under the headship of a priest-king. The Axomites had already converted to Christianity in the 5th century and were, much like the Armenians, examples of early Christian states. But it was Yemrehanna Krestos, who ruled at the end of the 12th century, who was, so it seems, the first Zagwe king to define the parameters of the new state, ruling Ethiopia according to Apostolic canons.³ The religious economy that developed during this time was composed of king, priests, and farmers, and was thus far different in tone from cosmopolitan Axum.

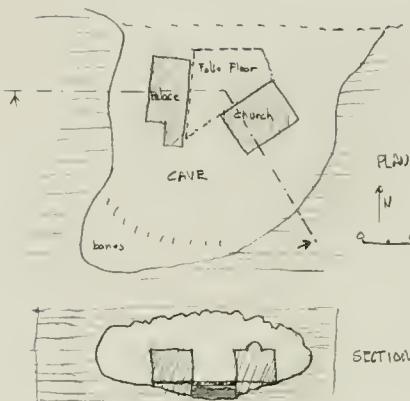
Yemrehanna Krestos's capital was centred in a now remote part of the Ethiopian highlands, some 200 kilometres south of Axum (fig. 4).⁴ Today all that is left of this capital is his palace and a church, which is still being used by the local population and the occasional pilgrim. The church is located at the mouth of a natural cave with spectacular views eastward into the surrounding valleys. The palace is placed alongside it, at an angle, some 16 meters to the west. The site was chosen because the cave, despite its elevation at 2600 meters over sea level, had a remarkable feature—a natural lake. All that needed to be done was to shore up the edges of the lake with foundations to support the two buildings and to seal off the space between the buildings with a floor. The floor, which still exists, was made of heavy and durable olive

01 Image of Libanos in Biet Abba Libanos. 02 View of Bete Giyorgis with water basin.

03 View of artesian spring behind Biet Emanuel. 04 View from the church-palace complex of Yemrehanna Krestos.

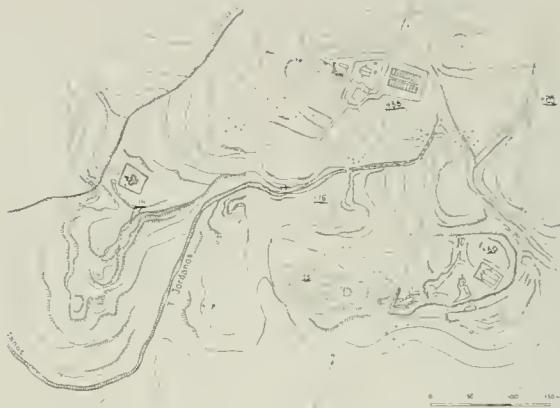
05 Church of Yemrehanna Krestos, trap door giving access to underground lake in front.





06

Plan and Section of the church-palace complex of Yemrehanna Krestos



07

Plan of Lalibela

80

wood beams, with access to the water below provided by a trap door just in front of the church (figs. 5 and 6).

The church, of course, was the central institution of the new state and, in fact, still today has some 120 priests associated with it, despite its remoteness. It was also the all-important interchange between religion and water that served as the economic base of the society. The king controlled the water supply, however, not only by physical means, but also by enhancing its symbolic value. This was not just any water, but "holy water," attracting a vast array of pilgrims to the city; needless to say, these pilgrims played an important part in the economy of the city. Today, one can see the bones of about five thousand such pilgrims, coming according to legend from far off places, piled up at the back of the cave.

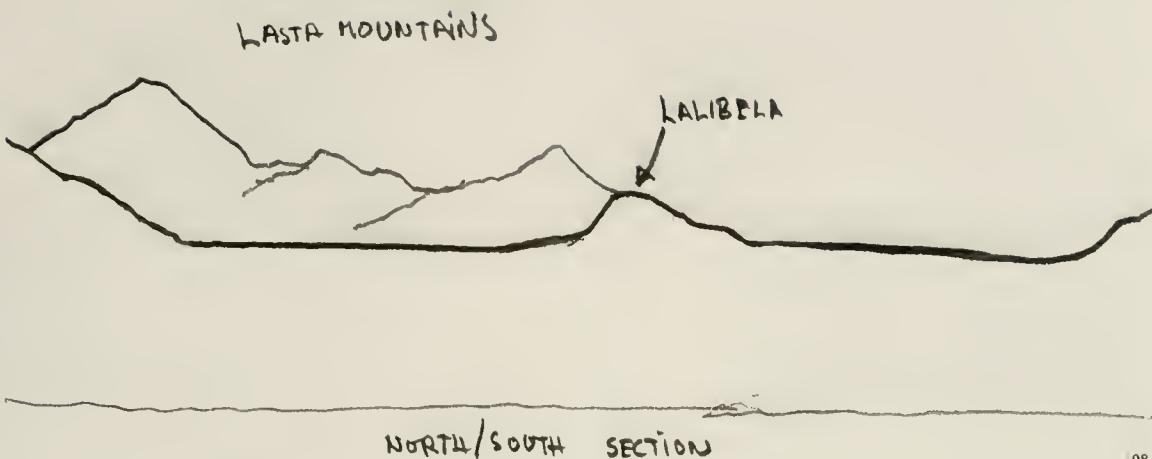
Yemrehanna Krestos's city failed, however, and its urban fabric, apart from the church complex, has long since disappeared. Perhaps there was not enough water apart from the one single source for a flourishing city. At any rate, Yemrehanna's younger brother, Lalibela (1181-1221), when he inherited the throne, moved the capital—which became named after him—even further to the south on the sloped, elevated site separated on all sides from the valley floor by steeply ascending paths.

In the design of the city, originally known as Roha, Lalibela used the same basic strategy as his brother, but at a grander scale (fig. 7). There was not one church, but at least twelve, all richly endowed and housing a substantial priestly class, living off the gifts of food and money from the peasants and pilgrims. Still today, Lalibela is Ethiopia's leading pilgrimage site, welcoming between 20,000 to 50,000 believers during important holidays, and supporting, at last count, about 350 priests and 250 deacons who are training to be priests, along with hundreds of monks and students. During Lalibela's day, the number was certainly higher.

Just as important as the question of institution-building was that of water conservation. Unlike Axum, which lay in a protected valley and where streams were diverted to create an artificial lake—the remnant of which is now nicknamed "The Bath of the Queen of Sheba"—the highlands were rugged and the valleys open to invaders. There was, for example, plenty of water in the valley rivers that flowed hundreds of meters below the hill-top site of Lalibela. But a site by the river would not have been easy to defend, and this reason is often given as an explanation for the choice of the current site on the top of plateau. There was, however, another reason Lalibela picked this spot. Here, remarkably, at the very top, there was water.

Though there are no hydro-geological studies of the site, it is close to indisputable that the water comes from an artesian aquifer, the source of which—as is common for aquifers—is miles away, in this case in the 3000 meter-plus high Lasta Mountain Range to the north. The tallest mountain of the range is Mt. Abuna Josepf some twenty kilometres away, but one 3000 meter peak is only three kilometres away. Lalibela, at an elevation of about 2000 meters is, in essence, in the foothills of these mountains (fig. 8). These springs were certainly known by local villagers long before the village there was transformed into a capital. But there is a big difference between water leaching out of the rocks and the water distribution system that is in place now.

The design of this distribution system was the work of an expert, who, so it seems, was brought in especially for this purpose. Not much is known about this man apart from his name, Abba Libanos. He held considerable stature, and there is even a church named after him. Inside the church one can still see a painting, probably a 19th-century copy of the original, which shows Libanos holding a cane against the top of a mountain (fig. 1). The cane, with a cross on top, though made of wood, has a metal tip in the shape of a small spade. From the spot where



Schematic north-south section through Lalibela

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it touches the earth, there springs a river.

It is not unreasonable to think that Libanos came from Lebanon and, if so, must certainly have known places like Petra (now in Jordan) which had an extensive and highly ingenious water system that collected water from rain as well as from outlying springs.⁵ Libanos, being a Christian, also most certainly was eager to flee the Islamic invaders who were closing in on the Christian kingdoms of Jerusalem and Tyre during the early 13th century. Did he come alone or with a team? Did he come with masons? There are no answers to these questions, but clearly Libanos was a recognized figure in the hierarchy. The church in which he is honored was also dedicated to Lalibela's wife, Maskal Kebra.

At the center of the Libanos' design was a River Jordan, an artificially-created canyon placed between the two clusters of churches and flowing into a naturally-occurring seam between two hills. It was most certainly linked to a network of channels that distributed the water along the hillside farms. It is also clear that the architects in making the water tanks had to dig down to a particular level to guarantee water in the tanks during dry season, this being the determining factor of the design. This level established the depth of the excavation around the church, and thus also the scale and proportion of the building.

Since there is almost a thousand years between the great Hellenistic cities of the Mediterranean and their well worked out water systems and the time of Lalibela, one might be tempted to think in terms of a decline. But our knowledge of medieval hydro-engineering is not fully developed, and to underestimate its sophistication would be a grave mistake. As Michael P. Kucher in his study of the water supply system of medieval Siena—also a hill-top town—has shown it was well-planned and regulated.⁶ The Lalibela water system is simpler than Siena's for there are no aqueducts; it was a spring water and rain water system.⁷ But it was most certainly no less planned. Libanos, this diviner of

water, was thus critical to the success of this city. He did his work not through magic—though that is how it may have appeared to the locals—but through century-old techniques which have long since faded from knowledge.

Almost all of the principal churches have a well or pool associated with them (fig. 3). In the wet season, these overflow and most of the water runs through specially-constructed channels into the River Jordan. In most of the square pools, papyrus grows on the surface. These pools serve a special religious purpose that is still enacted today. Infertile women—during a special ceremony—are lowered into the pool as a way to restore their fecundity. The papyrus symbolizing rebirth, the birth of Moses, and indeed the Nile River, adds to the symbolic charge of the pools. Bete Giyorgis, the famous cross-shaped church, has not only a pool of its own (fig. 2), but also a special east-oriented corridor that leads to a spring, the overflow from the spring going into a channel that leads to the River Jordan.

The contrast with Petra comes to mind. Modern-day researchers have determined the complex nature of the engineering there. But Petra has long since become an archaeological and touristic site. Lalibela is the opposite. Water is still flowing according to Libanos' designs, and it is also still a living religious site, but we have, unlike in Petra, no hydro-geological studies of how the water system actually works. What is certain is that the water of Lalibela had two economies. It was central to the agriculture of region. But it was also part of a brilliantly defined, political-religious economy that was watched over and maintained as something divine. Neither of these would have succeeded without Libanos.

81

“Ole Cloes”

By Hanna Rose Shell

Clothing, almost by definition, is portable. Clothes are made to be carried by the human body (as in the French *porter* and the Haitian Creole *pote*) as the body moves through space, time and life in the world. From their origins in the first days of human culture, textile skins were portable artifacts and temporary prostheses, shaped by the demands of a mobile body and inscribed with markers of that body's history. The demands on clothing have always been high—armor (protection against shame, enemies, and the elements) and aesthetics, comfort and durability. The portability of clothing, and its proximity to the human body, means that it is also changeable. Clothes are artifacts in continual flux.

Traditionally, vestments were few and far between. Their production took a great amount of human and material resources. Into their tailored forms much was literally and culturally invested. In the Western tradition, throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance, clothing, once shaped to a given body, might be worn for years, sometimes carried for a lifetime. The clothing wore its owner as much as the owner wore the clothing, bearing comparable markers of a personal narrative. Through the movements of a body in time, its clothes would acquire increasingly personal and human characteristics—worn knees and elbows, a stretched waist. Stains, patches, tears and color changes accompanied a life journey, or at least several decades thereof.

Sometimes an article's function was portable. This was especially true when even the simplest clothing was scarce, its production costly, time-consuming and labor-intensive. A coat might be cut down into a vest, or a dress into a scarf. As a garment's function evolved, so too might the identity of its wearer. A dress might be handed from mother to daughter, carrying with it signs and markers of generational passing. A master might give his worn-out shirt to his servant, for whom it could either serve as bodily cover or portable currency. In the Renaissance it was common for servants to sell their masters' old clothing to peasants in neighboring

villages. Itinerant rag and old clothes dealing grew into a veritable calling—a profession of portability. The dealer became an intermediary between wearers, marking a transitional phase in an article's mobile life history.

The advent of mass reproduction heralded an era of increasing clothing production, in Europe and North America especially. The more clothes there were, the more they changed hands. Cotton gins, mechanical looms and sewing machines made clothing easier to produce and more affordable to populations. By the mid-19th century, *prêt-a-porter* (ready-to-wear, ready-to-carry) clothing was being produced, traded and consumed in the international market economy. With more clothes for the taking, the middle class purchased more of them, therefore wearing each garment for less and less time.

Fashions changed faster. Clothing, manufactured by a mechanized immigrant labor force, became increasingly inexpensive to produce. Clothes became common instead of rare, and worn clothes were discarded or exchanged at an ever quicker pace. The paths of clothing increasingly departed from the bodies of single individuals and their families and began to travel the world. The result of excess was a new genre of, and set of possibilities for, the portability of clothing.

A range of paths developed for the second (and third and fourth) lives for secondhand clothing by the 19th century. A “shoddy” industry developed in England and North America, alongside the textile mills of the old and new Englands. *Shoddy* originally referred to a durable fabric woven out of a yarn spun of shredded refuse woolens. Shoddy, which stuffed the interiors of horse-drawn carriages, was refashioned into the wool uniforms and blankets that American and British soldiers carried on their bodies and wrapped around their fears in World War One.

By the early 20th century, secondhand clothing was resold in shops and through itinerant merchants. Most of these junk and



rag dealers were enterprising Jewish and Italian immigrants. In New York City, for example, ragmen collected cast-offs from up-town and carried them downtown for purchase by recent arrivals in need of inexpensive clothing. A new set of bodies, and a new set of histories, carried the old clothes into new places and directions.

A wool suit jacket tailored on the Upper West Side, traveled on the back of a wealthy banker between Central Park and Park Avenue. Stained at a champagne toast and discarded after six months, the suit jacket navigated a new existence in the thicket of the Lower East Side. Picked out of a rag dealer's wheelbarrow, minus several buttons, it was purchased by an Orchard Street milkman who wore it on a daily delivery route winding through Chinatown. The jacket took the shape of its wearer and carried his weight. Traces of the Jewish community—the smells of Eastern European cooking and cast-off buttons hawked by a peddler—were inscribed deep into the warp and woof of the woolen fabric. The satin interior, a second skin lining a second life, carried the increasingly sweat-stained labels naming its original owner and the uptown tailor. Every wearing in is also a wearing out.

Clothing's portability grants it a history of embodiment and transmutation, moving between bodies, cultures, nations and economies; it carries traces of one across the boundaries of another. In the late 20th and 21st centuries, cast-off clothes from North America and Europe increasingly journey overseas en route to encounters with new wearers. Clothes are compressed into half-ton bricks, bales that might contain the shirts off hundreds of human backs. A Panamanian ship, manned by a Romanian crew, carries the discarded textile skins to the port of Port-au-Prince. What arrives in Haiti, called *pepe*, is a resource to be worn (*pote*), an identity to be had and a politics on which to reflect. *Pepe* is a portable currency whose materiality is transformed by multiple processes of alteration, exchange and wear. Clothing wears the traces, and bears the burdens, of a portable history in progress.

Disassembling the Cinema: The Poster, the Film and In-Between

By Thomas Stubblefield

Opened onto its outside by the publicity system, the film spills its contents into the stream of everyday life, where they join other detritus of everyday experience.

- Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film*¹

The move toward reception studies and the re-emergence of historicism that has occurred within film studies over the last several decades has been at least partially motivated by a reaction against the ahistorical, essentializing tendency of the Lacanian-based apparatus theory that dominated the 1970's.² An integral part of this shift has been the introduction of the space of the theater as a highly contingent, localized space where cultural and social coding, personal desires and alternative modes of spectatorship converge.³ While successfully dethroning the self-effacing and autonomous space that Jean-Louis Baudry infamously regarded as a re-enactment of Plato's cave, this discourse at the same time obscured a more radical de-centering of the theater proposed by Roland Barthes and others.⁴ This latter body of work attempted to steer the discussion away from re-examining the cultural and historical specificity of the space of exhibition and toward questioning the very integrity of such a space to begin with. Rather than positing the cinema as a mode of seeing or even as perceptual labor that disciplines the sensorium, views that have become dogma within the discipline, the dispersal that this theory proposes is a literal displacement of the cinematic from the theater onto its surrounding space, a "portability" of the film experience itself whose conduit and motor is the publicity system. In the words of Victor Burgin, the film "spills its content into the stream of everyday life" through the sea of visual ephemera produced in the course of its promotion: posters, trailers, commercials and so on, displacing the cinematic onto non-cinematic spaces: the sidewalk, the home and the shopping mall, ultimately leaving film theory's object of study forever in quota-

tion marks. This paper will begin by tracing this "disassembly" of the cinema through the work of Roland Barthes and then move to a historical inquiry into the birth of the modern film poster in order to bring to light the economic and aesthetic forces that brought these relationships to bear.

Theorizing the "Portability" of Film Experience

Roland Barthes' 1975 essay, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater," delivered two damaging, if not fatal blows to prevailing models of film spectatorship at the time.⁵ The first comes by way of a confession in which Barthes admits to going to the cinema as much (if not more) to revel in the eroticism that its darkness provides than the film itself. This admission is based on an acknowledgement of a dual action of the projector, which, as Barthes tells us, not only presents an onscreen image but in the course of doing so transforms the spectator him or herself into an image for the consumption of others in the theater. The acknowledgement of this second "film" quickly leads to an even more profound destabilization of the space of exhibition. According to Barthes, as those bodies whose partial images the "dancing cone" reveals lose their self-consciousness in the perceived darkness and "slide down into their seats as if into a bed, coats or feet thrown over the row in front," the darkness of the theater is charged with "the modern eroticism" of the city and in a larger sense the separation between the theater and its outside breaks down.⁶ Spectatorship becomes the product of a complex intertextuality between the film and the narrative of its exhibition space, the latter of which is dispersed, "according to true metonymy," onto what has traditionally been regarded as non-cinematic spaces.⁷

Reading this piece in conjunction with Barthes' earlier text, "The Third Meaning," it becomes clear that it is not the darkness of the city alone that performs this disassembly and dispersal, but rather the trail of posters that resides within it. Here he

MUTUAL MOVIES

Look for the Mutual Sign Before You Enter



—This
Sign
Marks
the Very Best
Motion Picture
Entertainment in the World!



A Mutual Movies ad from 1913.



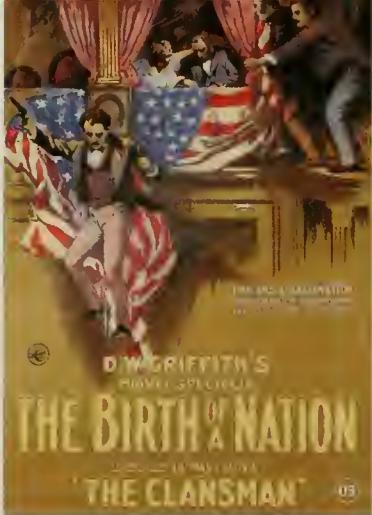
322 South Adams Street, Peoria, Illinois, 1916.

attributes his fascination with the "photos from a film (outside a cinema, in the pages of the *Cahiers du Cinéma*)" to the recognition of an alternate conception of cinematic movement, a "permutational unfolding" that is the structure of what he calls the "third meaning."⁸ In contrast to the more obvious layers of communication and signification, the third meaning marks "a supplement that the intellect cannot succeed in absorbing," disturbs continuity, and "is indifferent to the story and the obvious meaning."⁹ As it is the film still rather than the film from which it is taken that best represents this third meaning, Barthes will claim that "the filmic, very paradoxically, cannot be grasped in the film in situation, in movement in its natural state, but only in that major artifact, the still."¹⁰

In order to unpack Barthes' privileging of the still, his argument must be situated within a recurring discussion within film theory. Against the notion of cinematic movement as mimetic or natural, theorists such as Stephen Heath or Gilles Deleuze have posited the essence and radical potentiality of the moving image as, respectively, the production of an "excess" or "movement-image."¹¹ From this vantage point, continuity editing in commercial cinema and, to some degree, the illusion of movement itself, is engaged in a constant cycle of production and containment of this excess through which the spectator is sutured within the filmic diegesis.¹² According to Barthes, what differentiates the film still from other still images is the implied presence of a "diegetic horizon" which pulls the image forward, so to speak, despite its immobility.¹³ In these terms, Barthes' infatuation with the still image of the poster arises from its presentation of an excess that is not yet recuperated by a successive image or cut, and as such is more faithful to the cinematic than the film which it represents.

To return to our earlier discussion, we can now see that it is as a result of this position between legibility and illegibility, movement and stillness, that Barthes' encounter with the poster momentarily transforms the darkened streets of the city into the "twilight reverie" of the cinema. However, this reversal is counterbalanced by the fact that the still also contains a lure of its own, a "hypnotic power" that in leading one "from poster to poster...to the anonymous, indifferent cube" threatens to reappropriate this potentiality or excess in similar fashion as the onscreen image.

With this displacement of the film experience onto visual artifacts of the surrounding spaces of the theater, Barthes' theory provides us with a model of spectatorship that not only extends beyond conventionally cinematic contexts, but also alerts us to the pull or perhaps even appellation that the "film" may have upon the viewer beyond both



A Lithograph poster for D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915).



A poster for D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) featuring a still from the film.

04

the simple lure of advertising or the identification with the onscreen image. In order to better understand the motivations behind and the historical evolution of this process that Barthes and others have identified, I'd like to turn to a discussion of the modern film poster's coming of age.¹⁴ Here we will find that the vast commercialization of the film industry that occurs in the transitional period of 1905-1917 sets in motion a standardization and interconnectedness between the poster and the screen through which this "portability" of the cinematic becomes possible.

The Genesis of the Modern Film Poster

A common format of the film posters from the period preceding the "Nickelodeon Boom" of 1905-6 was what Kathryn Helgesen Fuller refers to as the "audience image."¹⁵ From Edison's 1901 poster for a Vitascope exhibition in Birmingham (fig. 5) to a Cook and Harris advertisement for a 1905 showing at the Elk's Opera House in New York, the audience is shown in almost stock fashion in these images, namely, enthralled by the wonder of the new medium. On these grounds, Fuller identifies the "audience image" with what Tom Gunning has called "the cinema of attractions," a mode of spectatorship and film production which preceded the arrival of narrative cinema and in which the apparatus and its illusion of motion was itself the star attraction.¹⁶ In these terms, the audience functions in conjunction with a larger attempt to foreground the apparatus and the uncanny illusion of reality it produced rather than to advertise the content of the film. The latter is utilized only secondarily, that is, only in so far as it magnifies the former.¹⁷

While Fuller is eager to establish the virtual disappearance of the "audience image" from film advertising as coinciding with the movement away from "actualities" and toward narrative cinema, the audience does not necessarily disappear from film posters after the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁸ Rather, they that take on a new role, one that is best illustrated by a Mutual Movies ad from 1913 (fig. 1). Here, the audience is divorced from the apparatus. Gone are the catatonic viewers of the Edison images. Instead, these well-dressed filmgoers serve to assuage the fear of the middle class audience that theater owners were now courting and to counter campaigns waged by activists like Jane Addams who saw the Nickelodeon as a house of vice. While the waning of the 19th-century fascination and astonishment with the cinematic apparatus certainly transformed the audience image, its disappearance only occurs after the middle class audience had been successfully procured by the film industry.¹⁹ From this point on, it is the moving

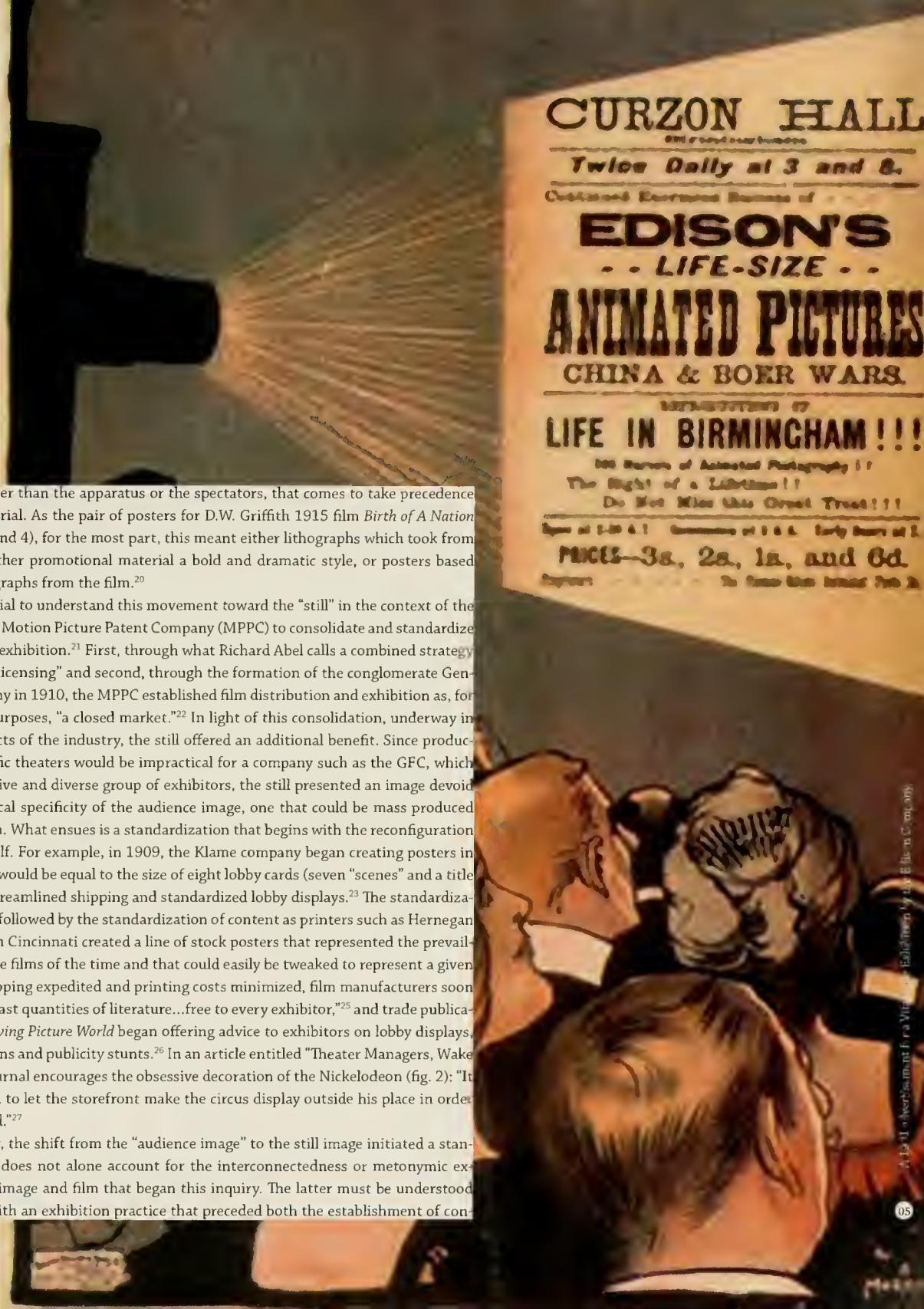


image itself, rather than the apparatus or the spectators, that comes to take precedence in publicity material. As the pair of posters for D.W. Griffith 1915 film *Birth of A Nation* illustrate (fig. 3 and 4), for the most part, this meant either lithographs which took from the circus and other promotional material a bold and dramatic style, or posters based upon still photographs from the film.²⁰

It is crucial to understand this movement toward the "still" in the context of the 1909 drive of the Motion Picture Patent Company (MPPC) to consolidate and standardize distribution and exhibition.²¹ First, through what Richard Abel calls a combined strategy of "lawsuits and licensing" and second, through the formation of the conglomerate General Film Company in 1910, the MPPC established film distribution and exhibition as, for all intents and purposes, "a closed market."²² In light of this consolidation, underway in virtually all aspects of the industry, the still offered an additional benefit. Since producing ads for specific theaters would be impractical for a company such as the GFC, which served an extensive and diverse group of exhibitors, the still presented an image devoid of the geographical specificity of the audience image, one that could be mass produced without variation. What ensues is a standardization that begins with the reconfiguration of the poster itself. For example, in 1909, the Klame company began creating posters in dimensions that would be equal to the size of eight lobby cards (seven "scenes" and a title card), allowing streamlined shipping and standardized lobby displays.²³ The standardization of form was followed by the standardization of content as printers such as Hernegan and Donaldson in Cincinnati created a line of stock posters that represented the prevailing subjects of the films of the time and that could easily be tweaked to represent a given show.²⁴ With shipping expedited and printing costs minimized, film manufacturers soon began sending "vast quantities of literature...free to every exhibitor,"²⁵ and trade publications such as *Moving Picture World* began offering advice to exhibitors on lobby displays, promotional tie-ins and publicity stunts.²⁶ In an article entitled "Theater Managers, Wake Up!" the trade journal encourages the obsessive decoration of the Nickelodeon (fig. 2): "It is all well enough to let the storefront make the circus display outside his place in order to attract a crowd."²⁷

However, the shift from the "audience image" to the still image initiated a standardization that does not alone account for the interconnectedness or metonymic exchange between image and film that began this inquiry. The latter must be understood in conjunction with an exhibition practice that preceded both the establishment of con-

glomerates and subsequent standardization of exhibition. As Tom Gunning points out, it was common practice in the 19th century to begin a showing with a projected still image which would, after a dramatic pause, suddenly be granted movement.²⁸ In fact, Albert E. Smith developed a water cell between the film and the light source that would allow the projector to hold the still without catching fire precisely for this purpose.²⁹ While the "aesthetic of astonishment" and the "cinema of attractions" were relatively short-lived modes of spectatorship, this residual connection between the still and its "magical transformation" gained a new currency within the film poster. In focusing on dramatic, climactic scenes, posters such as Griffith's *Birth of A Nation* (fig. 4) presented images that were themselves caught between motion and stillness and as such asked the audience to internally re-enact this early practice.

From the point of view of spectatorship, the result of this standardization between images in combination with the implied motion of the still itself is a peculiar displacement that André Bazin would later diagnosis as "the art of not seeing films."³⁰ In a 1944 article of the same name, Bazin, perhaps the ultimate cinephile, makes the provocative claim that a film can be legitimately be read, at least with "seventy-five percent accuracy," by the posters which advertise it. In essence, by reading the image through an elaborate "graphology" the image gives way to the film proper and in those cases where the film one "sees" through the poster is of inferior quality one can safely choose not to attend its showing. "Seeing" the film no longer necessitates the theater or even the film itself.³¹

The arrival of the "still" as the dominant graphical reference to film experience in combination with the standardization or codification of advertising practices make possible the metonymic exchange between the poster and the moving image of the film. With the web of standardization established between images, the film poster appropriates the ability of the filmic image, both moving and still, to exceed itself only to recuperate this excess elsewhere. This inquiry has focused on the poster and obviously each visual mode of extension constitutes its own unique discourse that must be approached on its own terms. However, one can't help but think that in a general sense it is this dispersal, endemic to the filmic form and perfected with the commercialization of the film industry; that grants film, a by now thoroughly antiquated technology, its continued relevance and vitality. In these terms, the evolution we have traced through the film poster is not all together different from the current migration of the cinematic across media and in turn time and space. The "artifact" that Barthes finds in the trail of posters is therefore both the anomalous element within our conventional understanding of the cinematic experience and also a record of the past. The latter, however, points simultaneously back to the birth of commercial cinema at the same time it prefigures the migration of the cinema across digitized formats where the materiality of the film and its space of presentation bring this process of portability to near completion.

Notes and Image Credits

Cover, and 6–7

Images: courtesy of Maleonn. www.maleonn.com

Food Comes First, 10–11

Images: courtesy of Peter Minosh.

The New Object, 12–19

1. The recording, of low quality, was made by the GSD, copied and preserved by me. It is not preserved at the GSD.
2. The imagery and ideas of Archigram are well documented in a book edited by the group's leading protagonist: Peter Cook, ed., *Archigram* (New York: Praeger, 1973; reissued New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999). An excellent essay on Archigram within British culture of the time is Nigel Whiteley, "Towards a Throw-Away Culture: Consumerism, 'Style-Obsolescence' and Cultural Theory in the 1950s and 1960s," *Oxford Art Journal*, 10:2 (1987), 3–27.
3. I do not think that I knew his work at the time, but it seems I was thinking of something like the system of "Supports" that John Habraken had advanced in *The Netherlands* in 1961. The English version is *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing* (New York: Praeger, 1972). Or perhaps I was simply thinking of the large space and bare walls of the warehouse loft conversions becoming common in that time. In any case, I chaired the committee that brought Habraken to MIT as Head of the Department of Architecture in 1975.
4. Stanford Anderson, "Architecture and Tradition," in Marcus Whiffen, ed., *The History, Theory and Criticism of Architecture* (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1966); also published by Bruno Zevi as "Polemica con Reyner Banham: architettura e tradizione vera," *L'Architettura* 10, no. 12 (April 1965): 828–831.
5. In a letter of 10 February 1967, the President of Deka, Everett S. Kaufman, explained that the two-mold system was more expensive, a cost that had to be made up in "eye-appeal." "To accomplish design one must be a professional and we employ an industrial design consultant firm (Schnur-Appel of Short Hills, New Jersey) and our development proceeds from concept through working drawings, through models, through labels, packaging, displays, catalogs and the colors which are to be offered in the product. We believe that the difference between success or failure in a low-cost plastic item is immeasurably small and all of the many facets of merchandising must be done correctly. That is, a bad color, a bad label or the wrong application of the material to the product can cause the product's down-fall." Kaufman kindly sent me an entire retail display of the product. Bongo Bowl's were made in sizes from 12oz. to 80 oz., with wholesale prices from 29¢ to 69¢. The 11qt. Bongo Basket was \$1.98. I have seen a reference that they were also sold by at least one large merchandiser: Sears.
6. "Cronkite's space pad": www.retrofuture.com/spaceage.html (accessed on 26 March 2007).

Images: Figs. 1–6, B–9, courtesy of Stanford Anderson. Andersen at lectern, reprinted from Harvard University Graduate School of Design alumni publication (Winter 1967). Fig. 7, unicaHome.

Mobility in Mobile, 20–25

The author thanks Arindam Dutta and Caroline Jones for their thoughtful critiques of the ideas in this paper as well as David Mindell, whose *War, Technology, and Experience Aboard the USS Monitor* inspired many of the trajectories of the research contained here.

1. *Army and Navy Journal*, vol. I (New York: Publication Office of the Regular and Volunteer Forces, 1864), 467.
2. Background information on the Hunley comes largely from R. Thomas Campbell's *The CSS H.L. Hunley: Confederate Submarine*, Ruth Duncan's *The Captain and Submarine CSS H.L. Hunley*, Edwin P. Hoyt's *The Voyage of the Hunley*, and Mark Ragan's *Submarine Warfare in the Civil War*.
3. Chas. W. S. Heaton, *Army and Navy Journal*, vol. II (New York: Publication Office of the Regular and Volunteer Forces 1864), 497.
4. Herman Melville. *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (Gainesville, FL: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, 1960), 181.
5. Bruno Latour, "Air," in Caroline Jones, ed., *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 105.
6. W.A. Alexander, "Thrilling Chapter In the History of the Confederate States Navy," in R. A. Broch, ed. *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Volume XXX (Richmond, VA: published by the Society, 1902; reprinted Klaus Reprint Co., Millwood, NY, 1977), 171.
7. *Ibid.*, 172.
8. According to Alexander, the support crew on shore had long since given up on the Hunley and had sent a message to General Beauregard reporting that the submarine had gone missing, lending some credence to the length of submergence.
9. From Wilfred Owens' *Dulce et Decorum Est.*: "GAS! Gas! Quick, boys! —An ecstasy of fumbling / Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time; / But someone still was yelling out and stumbling / And floundering like a man in fire or lime. — / Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light / As under a green sea, I saw him drowning." Wilfred Owens, "Dulce et Decorum Est.," in *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen* (New York: Chatto & Windus, 1963), 55.
10. It should be mentioned briefly that the development of underwater explosives (which falls outside the purview of this paper) was an equally vital aspect of the territorialization of the deep.
11. It is worth noting that moral standing is equated with the vertical dimension of Jonah's travels and that the surface of the ocean acts as a threshold between the Godly and the un-, a pervasive notion that lingers throughout the early history of the submarine. See also the hymn about Jonah's travails sung in Melville's *Moby Dick*: "The ribs and terrors of the whale / Arched over me a dismal gloom / While all God's sunlit waves rolled by / And lift me deepening down to doom." This presents us with a newly spatialized sense of the experience of submersion and, indeed, presents the whale as the prototypical submarine—a ready-made, habitable environment.
12. Alex Roland. *Underwater Warfare in the Age of Sail* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1978), 39.

13. Another innovative personal atmosphere of the era—the diving suit—will have to go undisussed.
14. Alexander, *ibid.* 166.
15. We see the Secessionist impulse in Nemo's insistent detachment from the world of the surface and society, we see overtones of slavery in Nemo's disempowered and almost invisible crew, and above all, we see the asymmetrical relationship between the *Hunley* and the *Housatonic* duplicated in the *Nutilus'* encounters with the navies of the world.
16. Jules Verne. *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, trans. William Butcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54.
17. Verne, *ibid.*, 68.
18. Verne, *ibid.* 78.
19. Michel Serres argues that the *Nutilus*, as it moves through the mobile element, is mapping and making visible an Edenic terrain, a "utopia of representation...by its vertical movement, it indexes the entire range of the classifications" of sea-life; the ocean's floor becomes an "invariable base upon which accumulate the aquatic layers of the taxonomist." This description conceals the political agenda behind Nemo's travels but it presents a potential template for an enlightened and edifying occupation of the deep, making portable the knowledge and experience of the ocean (Michel Serres, "Jules Verne's Strange Journeys," Maria Malanchuk, trans., *Yale French Studies*, 52 (1975): 180).
20. Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Reflections*, Peter Demetz, ed., trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York, NY: Schocken, 1978), 281.
21. That the bulk of the major innovations in submarine technology through 1864—including Verne's fictionalizations—came through civilian rather than governmental channels echoes the confrontation between citizenry and institutional control embodied in the phrase "Civil War."
22. The same rhetoric has been applied to nuclear warfare, particularly in regards to the threat of "mutually assured destruction."
23. Robert Fulton. *Torpedo War, and Submarine Explosions* (New York: William Elliot, 1810; reprinted William Abbott, New York, 1914), 41.
24. Cynthia Philip. *Robert Fulton: A Biography* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1985), 74.
25. R. Thomas Campbell. *The CSS H.L. Hunley: Confederate Submarine* (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 2000), 43.
26. This shift would not be long in coming: the Union soon embraced the submarine in response to the Confederate threat, removing the stigma of rebellion and institutionalizing the pursuit of underwater territory. In the October 1, 1864 edition of Harper's Weekly appears notice of the launching of the torpedo-boat *New Era*, so named because "the invention of this ingenious machine, by Chief Engineer W. W. Wood, U.S.N., introduces a new era in submarine warfare." (*Harper's Weekly* 7:405, 1) This New Era represents a technological threshold (it included a steam engine) and an entry into the possibilities of modern warfare, but it also represents a societal and political shift towards modern pragmatics—efficiency over nobility—and new ethical systems, in which the body becomes further disengaged from the act of war. Fifty years later, the underwater world would be among the most hotly contested arenas of World War I.
27. Louis S. Schafer. *Confederate Underwater Warfare: An Illustrated History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1996), 125.
- Images:** Figs. 1 and 6. Alphonse de Neuville in Jules Verne. *Vingt Mille Lieues Sous Les Mers*, (Paris: J. Hetzel 1875), 376, 104. Figs. 2, 3, 4, and 5, reprinted from Mark Ragan. *Submarine Warfare in the Civil War*, (Cambridge MA: Da Capo Press 2002), 142, 114, 2, 4

On Deck for Abortion Rights, 26–28

1. [Editor's note] Gynuity Health Projects has compiled an extensive annotated bibliography of clinical studies conducted on the use of misoprostol alone for early abortion (2003), http://www.gynuity.org/downloads/biblio_miso_early_ab.pdf (accessed May 2007).
- Image:** courtesy of Women on Waves.

Free and Offshore, 29–33

- Images:** courtesy of Saud Sharaf.

Cities of Ports, 34–37

1. Report of a Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of New York. In Relation to the Warehousing law, S63 S.misdoc.71, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., March 18, 1850.
2. Laurence F. Schmeckebeier, *The Customs Service: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1924), 53. *Tremlett v. Adams* S4 U.S. 295 at 303 (1851).
3. Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of our Times* (New York: Verso, 1994), 161. McCord Norman, *Anti-Corn Law League, 1838-1846* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958). Scott C. James and David A. Lake, "The Second Face of Hegemony: Britain's Repeal of the Corn Laws and the American Walker Tariff of 1846," *International Organization*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Winter, 1989), 1-29.
4. An effective critique of the idea of 'laissez-faire' in American history is "The Pluralist State: The Convergence of Public and Private Power in America," in Wendy Gamber, Michael Grossberg, and Hendrik Hartog, eds., *American Public Life and the Historical Imagination* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 27-48. Thanks to Michael Osman for permitting me to read portions of his forthcoming dissertation, "Regulation, Architecture, and Modernism in the United States, 1890-1920," Ph.D. Dissertation, MIT (in-progress).
5. George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1951), 176-206. Gary M. Walton and Hugh Rockoff, *History of the American Economy* (New York: Dryden Press, 1998), 177-B. Paul Wallace Gates, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 322-329. Perhaps the only domestic exception was agriculture, which would drastically expand its production and value in the following decades. Yet here too the British system figured greatly: as the British protective tariff prevented the profitable sale of American crops in England, the U.S. responded in kind, with vast agricultural subsidies for Western farmers.
6. Memorial of Sundry Merchants of New York, For the Establishment of a 'Warehouse System,' 256 H.doc.121 23rd Cong., 1st Sess., February 10, 1834. C.C. Cambreleng, Warehouse System, 262 H.rp.323, 23rd Cong., 1st Sess., March 7, 1834 Speech of C.C. Cambreleng, *Congressional Globe*, February 17, 1834.
7. Scott C. James and David A. Lake, "The Second Face of Hegemony: Britain's Repeal of the Corn Laws and the American Walker Tariff of 1846," *International Organization*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Winter, 1989), 1-3. 'An Act to Establish a Warehousing System,' 9 *United States Statutes at Large* 53 (August 6, 1846). Schmeckebeier, *The Customs Service*, 53. Edward Stanwood, *American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1904), II:82.
8. Hiram Gray, Boston, to J.P. Davis, Naval Officer, Boston, December 8, 1842. *1842 Treasury Warehousing Report*, 58. Thomas Gibbs Morgan, Collector New Orleans, to Walter Forward, Secretary of the Treasury, January 5, 1843. 421 H.doc.128, 27th Cong., 3rd Sess., February 9, 1843, 92. Edward Curtis, Collector New York, to Walter Forward, Secretary of the Treasury, *ibid.*, 64, 65 [emphasis added].
9. These customs records are: Record Group 36, Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Boston District, Letterbook, National Archives and Records Administration, Waltham, Mass. E.H. Derby, Boston: A Commercial Metropolis in 1850 (Boston: Redding & Co., 1850), 15.

- Frank H. Forbes, "The Old Boston Water Front, 1840-1850," in William S. Rossiter, *Days and Ways in Old Boston* (Boston: R.H. Stearns & Co., 1915), 46.
10. Merl E. Reed, "Government Investment and Economic Growth: Louisiana's Ante Bellum Railroads," *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 28, no. 2 (May, 1962), 183-201. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991). J.D. Debow, "The Destiny of New Orleans," DeBow's Review, vol. 10, no. 4 (April, 1851), 440-445. Thomas S. Richards Papers (March 16, 1840), 1838-1839, Louisiana Division, New Orleans Public Library. W. Alvin Lloyd, *Steamboat and Railroad Guide*,... (New Orleans: W. Alvin Lloyd, 1857).
 11. Memorial of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of New York, 414 S doc.7, 27th Cong., 3rd Sess., December 13, 1842.
 12. Henry R. Stiles, History of the City of Brooklyn (Albany: J. Munsell, 1869-79, 578-9. See also, Heman J. Redfield, Collector New York, to James Guthrie, July 3, 1856, Secretary of the Treasury, 859 H exdoc.119, 34th Cong., 1st Sess., July 8, 1856.
 13. Rep. Washington Hunt, Committee on Commerce, 545 H rp.141, 30th Cong., 2nd Sess., March 3, 1849.
 14. Robert J. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury, to Samuel F. Vinton, Chairman, Committee Ways and Means, August 9, 1848, 545 H rp.141, 30th Cong., 2nd Sess., March 3, 1849.
 15. Robert J. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury, to Samuel F. Vinton, Chairman, Committee Ways and Means, January 27, 1849, 545 H rp.141, 30th Cong., 2nd Sess., March 3, 1849. *Steamer New Philadelphia*, 66 U.S. 62 at 88 (1862). *The E.W. Gorgas*, 8 F. Cas. 927 (1869).
 16. Public Stores—New York, 1070 H rp.647, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., June 15, 1860, 34, 39, S9 60.
 17. Public Stores—New York, 1070 H rp.647, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., June 15, 1860, 60, 43 [emphasis added]. Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 111-124. *Atlantic Dock Co. v. Mayor of New York*, 53 N.Y. 64 (1873).
 18. *United States v. 4,432 Mastercases of Cigarettes*, 448 F.3d 1168 at 1192-1193 (2006) (9th cir.) (Wardlaw, J.).
- Image: Courtesy of Brian Dube and NewYorkDailyPhoto.com

Max Kuo, 38-45

1. Mike Davis, "Planet of Slums," *New Left Review* 26 (2004): 8-9. Davis paraphrases Wang Mengkui, advisor to the State Council.
 2. Megacities contain a population in excess of 8 million, and hypercities in excess of 20 million (Davis, *ibid.*, 6).
 3. Since the late 1970s, it is estimated that almost 300 million Chinese have moved from rural areas to cities; another 250 or 300 million are expected to follow in coming decades *Financial Times*, 16 December 2003 (Davis, *ibid.*, 9).
 4. In 2004, for example, foreign capital into China equaled half of total foreign investment in the developing world (*ibid.*, 9).
 5. In most cases, the urbanization-without-growth phenomena is the result of forces of global political economy, most notably the debt crisis of the 1970s and the subsequent IMF-led restructuring of Third World economies in the 1980s. As a result, urbanization occurs in spite of falling real wages, soaring prices, and skyrocketing urban employment.
- Images: courtesy of Max Kuo.

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Geography Simulator, 46-53

1. Rirkrit Tiravanija in Jérôme Sans, Marc Sanchez, eds., *What do you expect from an art institution in the 21st century?* (Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2001), 83.
 2. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Malden, Blackwell, 2003), 774.
 3. Alexander Kiossev, "Notes on Self-colonising Cultures", in Bojana Pejic, David Elliott eds., *After the Wall. Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe* (Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1999), 115.
- Images: courtesy of Plamen Dejanoff and MUMOK, Vienna, Austria.

Joel Ross, 54-56

Images: courtesy of Joel Ross and moniquemeloche gallery, Chicago, IL.

Xiao Xiong, 57-63

Images: courtesy of Xiao Xiong.

Broadcast Culture, 64-69

1. For the early history of radio set designs see Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986) and Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, *Social History of British Broadcasting: Serving the Nation 1922-1939* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
2. Samuel Weber, "Television," in *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*, ed. Alan Cholodenko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 108-128. The essay explores the similarities and differences between television and radio.
3. Allen S. Weiss, *Breathless: Sound Recording, Disembodiment, and the Transformation of Lyrical Nostalgia* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press), 2002.
4. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Curves of the Needle," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 605.
5. F. T. Marinetti and Pino Masnata, "La Radio (1933)," in *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio, and the Avant-Garde*, eds. Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 265-268.
6. Frank Warschauer, "The Future of Opera on the Radio," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 607-609.
7. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984). The "Introduction" summarizes his theory of the social taste and the rest of the book considers its different facets and effects of its misrecognition.
8. John Reith, "What is Our Policy?" in *Radio Times*, 2 (March 14, 1924): 442, quoted in Jennifer Doctor, *BBC and the Ultra Modern Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 26.
9. John C. W. Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1924), 21.
10. *Ibid.* pp. 15-17.

11. Ibid, p. 28.
12. Peter Mandler. *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1997).
13. Rudolf Arnheim, "The Imagery of the Ear," in *Radio* (Salem: Ayer Co., 1936), 21-26.
14. These are the opening words of Adorno's collected essays *Aesthetic Theory* where he considers the loss of art's self evidence due to a very different reason, namely, its misappropriation and misuse by Nazis, not the interface of competing notions of culture as happens with radio. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London, Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1984), 1.
15. Eric Newton (host), "The Artist in the Witness Box," in *Listener* 22:567 (1939:Nov. 23), 1004; *Listener* 23:576 (1940:Jan. 25), 163; *Listener* 23:578 (1940:Feb. 8), 263; *Listener* 23:582 (1940:Mar. 7), 480. *The Listener* was a BBC's weekly publication that featured abridged versions of select broadcasts.
16. Geoffrey Bousphrey, Edward Halliday & John Gloag, "What's Wrong with Design Today?" BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast the week of April 19 1933. Also published in *Listener* 9:223 (1933:Apr. 19), 610.
17. John Summerson, "Famous Midland Houses (I-VII)," BAL Archive John Summerson Papers, SuJ/10/1, Broadcast Talks, Famous Midland Houses 1937, broadcast between mid-May 1937 and 4 August 1935.
18. John Gloag. *Design in Modern Life* (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1934) was based on the BBC series hosted by Gloag a year before.
19. The correspondence between the BBC staff and speakers reveal these to be the primary concerns of the staff.
20. Herbert Read, "An Enquiry into Public Taste," in *Listener* 18:443 (1937:July 7), 31.
21. Eric Newton, "The Artist and his Public," in *Listener* 13:313 (1935:Jun. 9), 63.
22. Casson advice came in response to a question "How are we to tell whether a work is sincere or not?" in "Why Bother About Art? (A Discussion between Stanley Casson and a Philistine)." The role of the skeptic philistine in the conversation was played by a friend of Casson in *Listener* 7:170 (1932:Apr. 13), 533.
23. Anthony Bertram, "Design Everywhere," in *Design* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1938), 99, based on a series entitled "Design in Modern Life," also in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcasted on December 20, 1937.
24. Frank Pick "The Meaning and Purpose of Design," in *Design for Modern Life* (George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1934), 134. Also in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcasted on June 6, 1933.
25. Hon. Humphrey Pakington, "To-day and To-morrow in Architecture I: Tradition and Experiment," in *Listener* 3:68 (1930:Apr. 30), 769, broadcast on April 29, 1930.
26. John Summerson, "An Archive for Architecture," in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast on September 25, 1944, p. 1.
27. A. E. Richardson, "The Railway Station of Tomorrow" in *Listener* 15:377 (1936:Apr. 1), 619.
28. Listener letters responding to architectural programs published in *Listener* are awash with enthusiasm for purposeful design.
29. Geoffrey Bousphrey, "Revolution in the Home: New Order of Simplicity and Common Sense" BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast on July 14, 1931 and Stanley Casson, "On Using Our Eyes," in *Listener* 6:146 (1931-Oct. 28), 720-722, broadcast the week of Oct 28, 1931.
30. Geoffrey Bousphrey, "Your Home and Mine: Leaders and Followers," in *Your Home and Mine* (London and Hertford: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1938), pp. 175-178, broadcast in September 24, 1935 and December 10, 1935 and Stanley Casson, "Artists at Work-I. Why Bother About Art? (A Discussion between Stanley Casson and a Philistine)" in *Listener* 7:170 (1932:Apr. 13) p.531-533.
31. John Gloag, "Design in Industry (I)" in BBC WAC Transcripts, broadcast on September 7, 1932.
32. John C. W. Reith. *Broadcast Over Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1924), 17.
- Image: Radio Times, 1939.

Travels of the Carpet Myth, 70-73

I am grateful to Professor Nasser Rabbat, Deniz Turker, Michael Osman, Razan Francis, Winnie Wong, Elisa Lenssen, and my anonymous reviewers for their comments.

1. Use of the term "Islamic" in art history almost always means art made in some notion of the Arab tradition. Although the Arab-centric approach is problematic, it is so prevalent in writing on the origins of Islamic art (see Oleg Grabar's *The Formation of Islamic Art*, 1973), that here I will leave the terms engaged.
2. Lisa Golombok, "The Draped Universe of Islam," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World: Papers from a Colloquium in Memory of Richard Ettinghausen*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 36.
3. Richard Ettinghausen. *Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250*, rev. Oleg Grabar and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 275, describes the "tapestry-like" effect given by the "infinitely repeating geometric designs" of the stucco ornamentation of the buildings at Qal'at Bani Hammad in eleventh-century Al-Andalus.
4. Jules Goury and Owen Jones, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra* (London: Vizetelly Brothers and Co., printers, 1842-1845).
5. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder praktische Ästhetik: Ein Handbook für Techniker, Künstler und Kunstmfreunde*. (Frankfurt: Verlage für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1860-63). All quotes and terms from Semper's *Style* are taken from Gottfried Semper. *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics*. trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute: 2004).
6. For a full study of the period surrounding the Great Exhibition, see Debra Schäfer, *The Order of Ornament, the Structure of Style: Theoretical Foundations of Modern Art and Architecture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
7. Loos' notorious comment appeared in the Austrian *Neue Freie Presse* in 1898.
8. David Van Zanten, "The Architectural Polychromy of the 1830's" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1970). Mallgrave discusses polychromy as well, 21-32 in *Style*. Furthermore, the two did know each other; in a letter to English design patron Henry Cole, dated 1852, Semper says he has shown a draft of a manuscript illustration to Jones. See Wolfgang Herrman, *Gottfried Semper in Exile: Paris, London 1849-1855* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1978), appendix, Letter 4
9. Gottfried Semper, *Preliminary Remarks on Polychrome Architecture and Sculpture in Antiquity (Vorläufige Bemerkungen über bemalte Architektur und Plastik bei den Alten)* (Altona: Johann Friedrich Hammerich, 1834). Jones reproduces portions of this text in an 1854 pamphlet.
10. John Sweetman, introduction, Girault de Prangey, *Impressions of Granada and the Alhambra* (Paris: Veith and Hauser, Boulevard des Italiens, 1837; facsimile ed. Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 1996).
11. Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 12. Wigley makes this point partly to counter Semper's (unearned) reputation as a strict materialist, a charge leveled by Alois Riegel in 1901.
12. In the commentary for Plate XXXIX's large-scale mosaic reproductions, there appears a notice that "a method of producing these mosaics by machinery has recently been invented in this country, by Mr. Henry Pether," noting that it can produce considerable quantities at once.

13. Jones, *Alhambra*, commentary to Plate XXXV.
 14. Owen Jones, *An Apology for the Colouring of the Greek Court in the Crystal Palace* (London: Crystal Palace Library and Bradbury & Evans, 1854).
 15. *Ibid.*, 16.
 16. Gottfried Semper, from Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, 104.
 17. Jones' description of the project in the "Dedication to Jules Goury" at the start of the volume.
 18. Owen Jones, *Alhambra*, commentary to Plate I. The quote is highlighted in Gulru Necipoglu, *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 63.
 19. Pascual de Gayangos (1809-1897) lived in London from 1836-1843 preparing an English-language annotated translation of *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* by al-Maqqari, for the Oriental Translation Fund.
 20. The Nasrids were the rulers of Islamic Spain from 1230-1492 and are the patrons of the most elaborate elements of the Alhambra complex.
 21. Although "tracery" seems to connote the stonework of the Gothic window, de Gayangos indicates in his translation note that he has used "tracery" for the Arabic *tarqeesh*, meaning – he says – "any pattern of embroidery."
 22. English factory imitations are popular at this time. See "Shawl [Kashmir, India] (1998.217)" in *Timeline of Art History*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/intx/hod_1998_217.htm (accessed October 2006).
 23. Ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami of Tunis (1332-1406 AD) was a traveling polymath and is frequently hailed as a singular genius in his treatment of history and sociology.
 24. Ahmed ibn Mohammed al-Maqqari, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain* I, ed., trans., and annot. Pascual de Gayangos (London: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1840-1843): xxvii-xxxix. These dates suggest Semper had recently translated Ibn Khaldun when he composed the *Alhambra* prologue.
 25. Pushing the social context for the writing of these histories, it is easy to draw an analogy between the disorganized landscape of Muslim Spain and North Africa during the long dissolution of the Almohad Empire from the middle of the thirteenth century onward (with rampant wars and rebellions) and the convulsions of post-Enlightenment, not-yet-fully-nationalized Europe. Each produced similar assessments of society.
 26. See *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun*, ed. Radwan Ibrahim (Cairo: Dar Ihya al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1960), 107 and 110. Translations and interpretation generously provided by Razan Francis.
 27. See 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 68, from a section on "large tents and tent walls."
 28. *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalog*, London 1851 (reprinted New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 129.
 29. Arindam Dutta has highlighted a comment by Gottfried Semper on the ideal marketability of Oriental products. Semper says the objects are not designed for a particular place, but rather are most at home in a bazaar. See Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty, Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 113-117.
 30. Semper lived in London from 1850-1853, in exile from Dresden after his role in the 1849 May Uprising.
 31. Mallgrave discusses the influence of the *Great Exhibition* in Semper's writings in, "The Idea of Style: Gottfried Semper in London" (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1983).
 32. Semper, *Style*, 103. Semper made this argument persistently, including in an earlier 1851 version of *The Four Elements of Architecture*.
 33. Mallgrave's examples of the types of cases where Semper uses the term *Bekleidung* are taken from the translation note to *Style*.
 34. Semper, *Style*, 247.
 35. *Ibid.*, 104
 36. We might substitute that it lacks '*asabiyah*'.
- Images:** Fig. 1 Owen Jones. *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1856) XLI. Figs. 2 and 3 Jules Goury and Owen Jones. *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra* (London: Vizetelly Brothers and Co., printers, 1842-1845) XXXIV, XXXV.

Mobile Foundations, 74-77

A previous version of this article was presented at the ACSA 2001 meetings and published as "Global Constructions, or Why Guadalajara Wants a Home Depot While Los Angeles Wants Construction Workers," in Kim Tanzer and Rafael Longoria [eds], *The Green Braid: Towards an Architecture of Ecology, Economy and Equity* (London: Routledge, 2007).

1. Kenneth Frampton, "Introduction" in Frampton [ed.]: *Technology, Place, & Architecture: The Jerusalem Seminar in Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998), 14.
2. For historical readings of the Mexican design and construction industry, see Dimitrios A. Germidis *The Construction Industry in Mexico* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1972) and *Labour Conditions and Industrial Relations in the Building Industry in Mexico* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1974).
3. Raul Salinas de Gortari. *Tecnología, Empleo, y Construcción en el Desarrollo de México, Segunda Edición* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1993), 126. Note that this book's author is ex-President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's brother and is currently serving a prison sentence in Mexico for embezzling and murder. I rely on this text both because of its relation to design and construction services and, particularly, because of this telling connection. All translations were performed by the paper's author.
4. *Ibid.*, 34
5. *Ibid.*, 36.
6. *Ibid.*, 38.
7. *Ibid.*, 118 and 144. Design (*diseño*) and engineering (*ingeniería*) are terms with almost identical meaning in Spanish, and the architectural and civil engineering professions are closely aligned in Mexico.
8. *Ibid.*, 141-3.
9. See, for example, Gary Tulacz and Debra Rubin, "Mexico blooms as NAFTA looms" (November 1, 1993) or "Booming Mexican market may flourish with free trade" (September 27, 1997) *Engineering News-Record*. In the former, one contractor is quoted as saying "Mexico is going to happen with or without NAFTA."
10. Richard Korman and Steven Setzer, "Engineers seeking licenses," (November 1, 1993).
11. See Tim Grogan and Tom Ichniowski, "Mexico: Still Recovering from Crisis," (December 22, 1997) or Michael A. Moore, "Mexican firms are coping," *Engineering News-Record* (March 6, 1995).
12. Michael Flagg, "Southland is Hooked in Cheap Immigrant Labor..." *Los Angeles Times* (September 7, 1992).
13. Leonel Sanchez, "Drywallers' strike: confrontations multiply; 500 workers, mostly Latino," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (August 23,

1992).

14. Harry Bernstein, "The Drywallers--An Ironic Tale," *Los Angeles Times* (September 29, 1992).
15. Rick Burnham, "Union wants role in house building industry" *The Riverside Press-Enterprise* (May 7, 1995).
16. Mike Clements, "Drywallers' Strike Nails Down a Principle... Workers, Especially Immigrants, Need a 'Public Face' to Win Justice..." *Los Angeles Times* (November 16, 1992).
17. Michael Flagg, "A 'Landmark' Victory for Drywall Union; Labor: Mexican Immigrants Outlast Builders..." *Los Angeles Times* (November 11, 1992).
18. Sandy Stokes, "Over 400 Drywallers Deported," *The Riverside Press-Enterprise* (March 15, 1994).
19. Sandy Stokes, "INS Trying to Punish Drywallers," *The Riverside Press-Enterprise* (March 22, 1994).
20. David Bacon, "Shutting Down Homebuilding in LA Basin; Immigrants Lead New Surge of Labor Activism," *Pacific News Service* (May 9, 1995).
21. *Pacific News Service* (May 9, 1995).
22. Nancy Cleland, "Las Vegas Labor Protests Brought to LA Builder," *Los Angeles Times* (April 2, 1999).
23. --, "Work Force," *Engineering News-Record* (May 24, 1999): 44.
24. Alan Goosner, "Let in More Mexicans Legally," *Engineering News-Record* (August 16, 1999): 99.

Images: Fig. 1, *West Contra Costa County Times* (January 2000). Fig. 2, reprinted from Raul Salinas de Gortari, *Tecnología, Empleo, y Construcción en el Desarrollo de México, Segunda Edición* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1993), 89. Fig. 3, reprinted from Aurelio José Barrera, *Los Angeles Times* (November 16, 1992.)

Lalibela and Libanos, 78–81

1. Research was made possible by a grant from the MIT School of Humanities, Art and Social Sciences Research Grant.
2. Among the most recent scholarship, there are the following works: Jacqueline Pirenne, "La signification symbolique des églises de Lalibéla, à partir des inscriptions découvertes en 1980-1983," in ed. Taddesse Beyene, *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa*, 1984 (Addis Ababa: 1989), 137-45; Michael Gervers, "The Rehabilitation of the Zagwe Kings and the Building of the Dabra-Sima-Golgotha-Sellassie Complex in Lalibela," [http://www.utoronto.ca/deeds/pubs/golgotha/golgotha.html#_edn12 (June 12, 2007)]; Marilyn E. Heldman, "Architectural Symbolism, Sacred Geography and the Ethiopian Church," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22/3 (Aug., 1992), 222-241; Giger Tesfaye, with the collaboration of Jacqueline Pirenne, "Inscriptions sur bois de trois églises de Lalibala," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies* 17 (1984), 107-43; D.R. Buxton, "Ethiopian Medieval Architecture - The Present State of Studies", *Ethiopian Studies, papers read at the Second International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Manchester University, July 1963)*, ed. C.F. Beckingham & Edward Ullendorff, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 9 (1964), 239-44; Emeri van Donzel, "Ethiopia's Lalibala and the fall of Jerusalem 1187," *Aethiopica*, 1 (1998), 27-49; Tadesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527* (Oxford, 1972).
3. Tamrat Tadesse, *Church and State in Ethiopia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 61 n.3.
4. It is also sometimes spelled Yemrehanna Krestos.
5. On Petra, see: See: Charles R. Orloff, "The Water System and Distribution System of the Nabataean City of Petra (Jordan) 33 BC- AD300" [published online, June, 2007] http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FCAJ%2FCAJ15_01%2FS0959774305000053a.pdf&code=06a4dafe5df8a15b559d97c60a9e146d
6. Michael P. Kucher. *The Water Supply System of Siena, Italy: The Medieval Roots of the Modern Networked City* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
7. For other literature dealing with medieval water systems see: Peer Beaumont, Michael Bonine and Keith McLachlan, eds. *Qanot, Kariz, and Khattara: Traditional Water Systems in the Middle East and North Africa* (London: Middle East & North African Studies Press 1989); Leigh-Ann Bedal. The Petra pool-complex: a Hellenistic paradiseis in the Nabataean Capital: Results from the Petra "lower market" survey and excavations, 1998 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2004); Dora P. Crouch. *Water Management in Ancient Greek Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Thomas F. Glick. *Irrigation and Society in Medieval Valencia* (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970); Roberta Magnusson and Paolo Squarriti, "The Technologies of Water in Medieval Italy," in *Working with Water in Medieval Europe: Technology and Resource Use* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Paolo Squarriti. *Water and Society in early Medieval Italy, AD 400-1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Images: courtesy of Mark Jarzombek.

Ole Cloes, 82–83

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Disassembling the Cinema, 84–88

1. Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 12.
2. "Apparatus theory" refers to a school of film theory practiced by Jean-Louis Baudry, Jean-Louis Comolli, Christian Metz and others who conceptualized film spectatorship through psychoanalysis, in particular the Lacanian mirror stage, and Althusserian Marxism. In its most militant form, this group saw the very nature of cinema, irrespective of content, as ideological in its concealment of difference and "suturing" of the spectator within the filmic world. Sometimes used interchangeable with "screen theory" a group formed around the British journal *Screen* at around the same time. Members of this latter group include Stephen Heath, Colin MacCabe and Laura Mulvey.
3. Works representing this move to spectatorship and reception include Judith Mayne. *Cinema and Spectatorship* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Mayne, "Immigrants and Spectators," *Wide Angle* 5, no. 2, (1982), 32-40; Janet Staiger *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception* (New York University Press, 2000); Jackie Stacey. *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Annette Kuhn. *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2002); and Miriam Hansen. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).
4. Jean-Louis Baudry "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema" in Philip Rosen ed., *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*
5. I am here again alluding to the ideal spectator posed by apparatus theory and other Lacanian based "subject position theories" of the time.
6. Roland Barthes, "Upon Leaving the Movie Theater" in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), 346.
7. *Ibid.*, 345-6.
8. Barthes. "The Third Meaning" in *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 6S.
9. *Ibid.*, 61.

10. *Ibid.*, 65.
11. Stephen Heath. *Questions of Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981). Gilles Deleuze. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. High Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam trans. University Minnesota Press, 1986.
12. "Continuity editing" in its most literal usage refers to a mode of editing which preserves action through the cut, in opposition to, for example, the "jump cut" which breaks the continuity between frames. However, continuity or seamless editing is at the same time part of the larger shot / reverse-shot structure of Hollywood cinema through which the viewer is placed in the filmic world.
13. Barthes. "The Third Meaning," 68-66.
14. While this essay has focused on the work of Roland Barthes, similar sentiments can be found within a work of a handful of subsequent theorists, most notably in the work of Victor Burgin who in his 1996 work *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (University of California Press) claims "...a 'film' may be encountered through posters, blurbs, and other advertisements, such as trailers or television clips; it may be encountered through newspapers reviews, reference work synopses and theoretical articles... ; through their production photographs, frame enlargements, memorabilia, and so on. Clearly, this "film"—a heterogeneous psychical object, constructed from image scraps scattered in space and time—is a very different object from that encountered in the context of film studies" (22-3). That this dispersal can operate as chain of images through which the would-be spectator is beckoned to the film proper also appears in Burgin's work. For example, in *The Remembered Film* he relates an experience in Paris where his nearly constant interaction with a poster showing a film still from *Eyes Wide Shut* came to establish "a place between the photograph and the film," a time of arrest that in Lacanian terms functions as the "lure" (38). Anna Friedberg identifies an even more disconcerting scenario in the relationship of the multiplex theater and the shopping mall. In equating the former with the "spectatorial flânerie" of the VCR, Friedberg explains: "the multiplex positions its cinema screens in spatial metonymy of a chain of adjacent store windows [so that] when one reaches the cinema screen, the stillness of the shop mannequin is transformed into the live action of film performance." Reprint in "Spectatorial Flânerie" in *Exhibition: The Film Reader*, Ina Rae Hark ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 177.
15. Kathryn Helgesen Fuller. "Viewing the Viewers: Representations of the Audience in Early Cinema Advertising" in Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby eds., *American Movies Audiences* (London: BFI, 1999).
16. Tom Gunning. "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde" in Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker eds., *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: BFI, 1990), 58.
17. This is evident in the Cook and Harris example where the exaggerated perspective of the steamship is noteworthy more for its apparent breeching of the boundary between screen and reality than its narrative significance.
18. Kathryn Helgesen Fuller. "Viewing the Viewers: Representations of the Audience in Early Cinema Advertising." in *American Movies Audiences*, Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby eds. (London: BFI, 1999), 112-8.
19. This transformation would only be fully realized with the arrival of the movie palaces of the 1910's.
20. According to Anthony Slide, the first still was published in 1901 as part of the promotion of *A Million and One Nights* (218). From here on I use "still" in quotations mark to refer to an image which references dramatic content of the film without recourse to the audience or apparatus, in other words as an image which may or may not be necessarily photographic.
21. An oligopoly formed in 1908 consisting of virtually all of the major film companies including Edison, Biograph, Vitagraph, Essanay, Selig, Lubin, Kalem, American Star and American Pathé, broken up by a series of decisions by the courts, most notably a decision in 1912, which cancelled the patent on raw film, and a second in 1915, which cancelled all MPCC patents.
22. Richard Abel. *Americanizing the Moves and "Movie-Mad" Audiences 1910-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 14-17.
23. Anthony Slide. *Early American Cinema* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1994) 218-9.
24. Kathryn H. Fuller. *At the Picture Show* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 126.
25. For example, by 1928 a typical campaign by the national theater chain Publix "called for nearly 10,000 posters, of all sizes, printed in bulk at discounted prices." Douglas Gomery, "Fashioning an Exhibition Empire," in Gregory Waller ed., *Moviegoing in America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 131.
26. "The Moving Picture and the Press," *Moving Picture World* (6 May 1911).
27. P.A. Parsons, "A History of Motion Picture Advertising," *Moving Picture World* (26 March 1927): 308.
28. Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)Credulous Spectator," in Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen eds., *Film Theory and Criticism*, (Oxford University Press, 1999), 822-3.
29. In his showings of *The Black Diamond Express*, Smith, and many other exhibitors from the Lumière and the Edison companies, would begin with the still of the locomotive and then after a dramatic address, suddenly bring the image to life. According to Gunning, the ensuing astonishment on the part of the audience "derives from a magical metamorphosis rather than a seamless reproduction of reality." (822)
30. André Bazin, "The Art of Not Seeing Films," in *French Cinema of the Occupation and Resistance*, Stanley Hochman trans. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1981), 73-4.
31. *Ibd.*
- Images:** Fig. 1, reprinted from Richard Abel. *Americanizing the Moves and "Movie-Mad" Audiences 1910-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 94. Fig. 2, reprinted from Eileen Bowser. *The Transformation of Cinema 1907-1915* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1990), 272. Fig. 3, reprinted from Emily King. *Movie Poster* (London: Octopus Publishing, 2003), 21. Fig. 4, courtesy of DVDbeaver.com. Fig. 5, courtesy of A. Wichmann.

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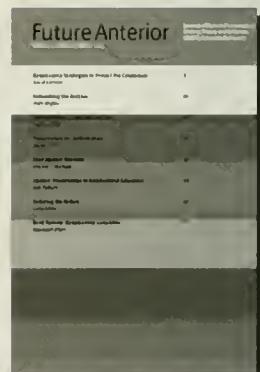
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Call for Works

Residual // thresholds 35

Waste is the result of bad design.

-Eric Lombardi, EcoCycle

There are, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.

-Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces"

Relegated to an occasional afterthought, the residual has been to a large degree invisible and forgotten. One may attribute such erasure to the paradox that the residual is at once ubiquitous and placeless: the ubiquity has led many to equate the residual with the staggering material waste of our time, where "garbage" is most often dealt with out of convenience or utility; residual's lack of location, or specific locations, has made it so banal that the problematics itself becomes unnecessary, disposable and even obsolescent.

Some practitioners and theorists, however, have steadfastly embraced the residual for its heterotopic situatedness and materiality, its subversive relationships with the built environment and the cultural context, and its potential to offer principled strategies for one's existence in a world characterized by flux. Gordon Matta-Clark's *Fake Estates* (1973-4), for instance, poised to examine the intersections between city bureaucracies, use value, artifacts and architecture through fifteen slivers of lots scattered in Queens and Staten Island, New York. Dominique Laporte observes in *History of Shit* (1968) how the regulations on bodily refuse helped articulate the emerging concepts of the public and private in 16th-century France. Michael Warner, in *Trouble with Normal* (1999), argues for an ethics of queer life that resists the normalizing forces of the mainstream culture. Paul Auster, in the memorable ending of his novella, *City of Glass* (1987), contemplates what remains after the total deconstruction of the self.

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